British Columbia
Vital Statistics Agency

Annual Financial and Performance Report For 2002/2003

Ministry of Health Planning

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I respectfully submit the seventh annual report on the operations of the British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, established April 1, 1996.

This document reports on the Agency's performance in its seventh year of operation, as a Special Operating Agency (SOA), regarding financial and performance measurement information.

The Agency's primary objectives are to meet its financial and measurable performance targets. I am pleased to announce the Agency's net operating expenditures were $182,749 under budget and, overall, the Agency produced a net surplus of revenue over expenditure of $2,453,803.

I would like to highlight some of the accomplishments reported in this document:

- The Agency actively continued to pursue private sector partnerships for the provision of its services. A major expansion of service delivery points in Victoria and Vancouver for the issuance of marriage licences was achieved through the utilization of private firms such as regional and independent insurance companies already recognized for their local customer oriented services.

- During the last year, new change of name legislation was enacted to ensure criminals could not create a new identity and lose their criminal past by legally changing their name. Amendments to the *Name Act* established the requirement for fingerprinting and mandatory criminal record checks as components and conditions of the change of name process for all applicants over the age of 18.

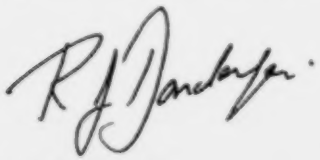
- A significant upgrading of the Health Status Registry system was achieved over the last year through the conversion of the current single-user Microsoft Access database to a multi-user Oracle environment. The replatforming of the registry not only provides both the functionality and flexibility of a multi-user environment but also establishes more robust security features and a database development environment in-line with other Agency databases.

- Continuing development of the Data Warehouse project (VISTA) over the last year saw the successful piloting of external access for a select working group of users utilizing both client server and web access technology. Selected users such as the Vancouver Health Authority, office of the Provincial Health Officer, health researchers at Simon Fraser University and the Ministry of Children and Family Development were able to utilize a variety of tools made available within the project to conduct data and trend analysis encompassing the full range of working data sets provided by the Agency.

- The Agency's primary operational application program (VISION) was enhanced with the Oracle software platform being upgraded to version Oracle9i. This upgrade provided improved functionality including extended availability, necessary to implement the remote validation and verification of birth certificates within the Passport Canada Birth Certificate Validation pilot project.

Security and identity concerns continued to be a primary focus of Agency plans and initiatives over the last year. The Agency continued to promote and participate in the joint efforts of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Identity in Canada and the Security Committee of the Vital Statistics Council. The Agency has taken a lead role in co-ordinating and hosting regular security workshops, which have provided a unique forum for stakeholders to co-ordinate and monitor a wide range of identity and security related initiatives at both the provincial and national level.

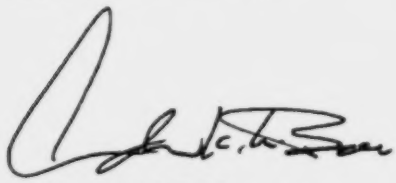
In summary, I would like to acknowledge that the success of the Agency is a direct result of the people who work within, and in support of the organization. The employees of the Vital Statistics Agency and its service providers continue to meet the challenge of making this organization a success as a Special Operating Agency.



R. J. Danderfer
Chief Executive Officer and Director
British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency

2. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The statements of Revenue and Summary of Expenditures on the following pages represent the financial results of the Agency for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2003. These statements are not audited. Balances presented have been reconciled with balances presented in the draft Public Accounts for the fiscal year 2002/2003 as certified by the Agency. Detailed expenditure information for fiscal 2002/2003 consistent with details provided in previous reports is located in Appendix A of this Report.



Andrew K. McBride
Senior Financial Officer
British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency

2.1. EXPENDITURE SUMMARY 2002/03

Actual net operating expenditures for the fiscal year 2002/2003 were $182,749 under budget. This resulted in a net surplus of revenues over expenditure of $2,453,803.

The deficit of $67,933 in Salaries and Benefits is the result of a number of position reclassifications not anticipated in the 1998 planning process. Budgetary reallocations to address these issues are to be implemented for fiscal 2003.

Total operational expenses exceeded targets by $245,444. These above target expenditures were the result of systems expenditures and related capital amortization costs associated with identity security initiatives and implementation of the vital statistics data warehouse. Although above target these expenditures were planned and undertaken with the understanding that the Agency would find the additional funding required either through reducing other expenditures or finding sources of recovery funding to offset costs. The overall deficit in this expenditure classification was more than offset by reduced salary costs associated with FTE reductions and higher than expected recoveries, most notably from other Ministry investment in the warehouse project.

The capital allocation for fiscal 2002/2003 was under spent by $763,428 due to delays on the part of federal partners in developing and implementing major systems initiatives associated with increasing security for identity documents and records.

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY 2002/03

STOB		BUDGET 2002/03	ACTUAL 2002/03	VARIANCE 2002/03
50	BASE SALARIES	3,994,000	3,913,301	80,699
51	SUPPLEMENTARY SALARIES	50,000	47,853	2,147
52	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	903,000	935,035	(32,035)
	TOTAL SALARIES AND BENEFITS	**4,947,000**	**4,896,189**	**50,811**
57	TRAVEL	55,000	67,393	(12,393)
60	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	25,000	32,210	(7,212)
63	INFORMATION SYSTEMS	954,000	1,137,945	(183,945)
65	OFFICE AND BUSINESS EXPENSES	555,000	558,733	(3,733)
68	STATUTORY NOTICES	108,000	86,832	21,168
69	UTILITIES/MATERIALS/SUPPLIES	27,000	33,330	(6,330)
70	OPERATING EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES	26,000	9,821	16,179
73	AMORTIZATION EXPENSE	479,000	552,552	(73,552)
75	BUILDING OCCUPANCY CHARGES	562,000	557,628	4,372
	TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	**2,791,000**	**3,036,444**	**(245,444)**
77	GRANTS	18,000	50,000	(32,000)
80	CONTRIBUTIONS	38,000	27,187	10,813
	TOTAL GRANTS	**56,000**	**77,187**	**(21,187)**
85	INTEREST AND OTHER EXPENSES	0	441	(441)
	TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	**0**	**441**	**(441)**
	GROSS OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**7,794,000**	**8,010,261**	**(216,261)**
88	INTERNAL RECOVERIES	(278,000)	(520,304)	242,304
89	EXTERNAL RECOVERIES	(407,000)	(563,706)	156,706
	TOTAL RECOVERIES	**(685,000)**	**(1,084,010)**	**399,010**
	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURES	**7,109,000**	**6,926,251**	**182,749**
	REVENUES	**9,070,000**	**9,380,056**	**310,056**
	SURPLUS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE	**1,961,000**	**2,453,803**	**492,805**
	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEES	**93.00**	**87.60**	**5.40**
CAPITAL ASSET ACQUISITIONS				
	INFORMATION SYSTEMS	1,553,000	789,465	763,535
	OPERATING EQUIPMENT	5,000	5,876	(876)
	OFFICE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT	20,000	19,231	769
	TOTAL CAPITAL ASSET ACQUISITIONS	**1,578,000**	**814,572**	**763,428**

2.2. REVENUE 2002/03

Actual revenues for the Agency in fiscal 2002/2003 were $310,056 above target. The major areas where actual revenues exceeded targets include the sale of regular order birth certificates to the general public, rush service wills searches and marriage licences. Birth certificate sales to the general public have increased due to increased demands on the part of producers of second level identification (passports and drivers licences) for foundation identification documents such as birth certificates. Rush service requests for wills notice searches have increased primarily as a result of users becoming familiar with the availability of the service. Marriage Licence sales counter recent trend of a decreasing marriage rate. This may be an anomaly or an indication of trend changes in marriage occurring elsewhere in Canada.

Legal Change of Name revenue is lower than target due to the legislative changes requiring adult applicant s for changes of name to be fingerprinted. This difference is far lower than anticipated when the legislation was introduced.

	BUDGET 2002/03	ACTUAL 2002/03	VARIANCE 2002/03
BIRTH CERTIFICATION	3,250,000	3,515,681	265,681
DEATH CERTIFICATION	1,447,000	1,411,437	(35,563)
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATION	504,000	490,124	(13,876)
CHANGES OF NAME	597,000	543,333	(53,667)
WILLS SERVICES	955,000	1,037,871	82,871
MARRIAGE LICENCES	2,100,000	2,160,730	60,730
CIVIL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES	930,000	911,250	(18,750)
REGISTRATION AMENDMENTS	53,000	54,027	1,027
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES	1,000	5,226	4,226
DISHONOURED CHEQUES	14,000	11,682	(2,318)
TOTAL GROSS REVENUES	9,851,000	10,141,361	290,361
COMMISSIONS DEDUCTED FROM REVENUE	(756,000)	(739,587)	16,413
DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS	(25,000)	(21,718)	3,282
NET REVENUES	9,070,000	9,380,056	310,056

3. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The major goals of the Agency are to contain costs and at the same time provide increased service volumes, improved efficiency and effectiveness, and an increased level of customer satisfaction. The performance measures detailed on the following pages are used to determine the extent to which the Agency is meeting its strategic goals; specifically goals 1, 2, and 5 as defined in the Framework Agreement and Business Plan. The measures in the tables on the following pages are designed, through comparison of target to actual results, to report on the Agency's ability to meet targets established in the Business Plan. Management also uses these measures for service evaluation and planning.

Service volume measures are used to confirm whether or not the number of services being provided meet expectations. Management also uses this information to track trends for planning new programs and determining resource allocations.

Unit Costs represent a merger of expenditure and service volume information and are used to determine if the Agency is obtaining economic efficiency as a result of its efforts to streamline processing operations and provide more services at less cost. This measure also enables the Agency to gauge its economic efficiency during periods of decreasing service demand.

Service Standards - Days to Complete Service is a measure to determine if the Agency is meeting objectives of reducing turnaround time; this measure is important, because Agency clients increasingly demand faster turnaround on documents and services. This measure is also used to monitor the effect of processing changes designed to reduce turnaround times.

Customer Satisfaction measures based on customer feedback determine if service delivery, staff training and quality service initiatives are effective.

In general the following tables indicate that while volumes did not grow as projected, unit costs were reduced below target levels (a result of reduced spending). Service turnaround times were reduced significantly more than originally targeted and customer satisfaction increases met or exceeded projected levels.

3.1. VOLUMES

		Forecast	Actual	Variance
Legal Certificates				
	Birth Certificates	135,742	131,010	(4,732)
	Marriage Certificates	35,580	37,330	1,750
	Death Certificates	52,800	51,811	(989)
	Change of Name Certificates	3,871	4,420	549
	Total Certificates	**227,993**	**224,571**	**(3,422)**
Registrations				
	Birth Registrations	40,000	40,599	599
	Notice of Birth	40,000	40,599	599
	Marriage Registrations	21,000	21,176	176
	Death Registrations	27,400	29,099	1,699
	Total Registrations	**128,400**	**131,473**	**3,073**
Wills Services				
	Wills Notices	47,600	45,267	(2,333)
	Wills Searches	12,400	13,244	844
	Wills Search – Alias	6,200	7,336	1,136
	Total Wills Services	**66,200**	**65,847**	**(353)**
Marriage Licence Applications		**21,000**	**21,607**	**607**
Legal Changes of Name		**5,013**	**4,472**	**(541)**
Other Services				
	Commemorative Certificates	2,552	3,209	657
	Registration Amendments	1,962	2,001	39
	Genealogy Requests	1,702	1,906	204
	Adoption Record Releases	800	642	(158)
	Certified Registration Copies	2,300	3,223	923
	Total Other	**9,316**	**10,981**	**1,665**

Volumes for birth certificate sales reflect an overly optimistic target, a falling provincial birth rate and reduced demands for birth certificate copies from social service agencies. There were 3,000 more birth certificates issued than in fiscal 2001/02. The corresponding revenue increase indicates this is the result of increased sales to the general public. Registrations were slightly better than targets. Increased numbers of marriage registrations may indicate a bottoming out or change in the trend for fewer marriages. The number of deaths is up significantly but not outside the range of normal fluctuation.

The number of Legal Changes of Name was affected by the implementation of legislation requiring the fingerprinting of all adults applying for a change of name. This impact of this was far lower than expected. Volumes of all other activities up slightly from fiscal 2001/02 though in some cases such as wills notices remain below targets.

3.2. UNIT COSTS

	Target	Actual	Variance
Regular Certificates	15.01	14.44	(0.57)
Rush Certificates	33.44	32.17	(1.27)
Registrations	14.54	13.99	(0.55)
Wills Notices	6.72	6.47	(0.25)
Wills Notice Searches	16.99	16.35	(0.64)
Marriage Licences	12.28	11.82	(0.46)
Regular Change of Name – Applicant	118.71	114.21	(4.50)
Change of Name - Additional Persons	15.01	14.44	(0.57)
Other Services	33.66	32.38	(1.28)

In fiscal 2002/2003 the Agency achieved its unit cost targets in all areas of activity. This was primarily due to a combination of cost reduction efforts, increased recoveries and stable volumes associated with most activities.

Details on the calculation of unit costs are published in section 2.5.1 of the 1999 - 2004 Agency Business Plan.

3.3. SERVICE STANDARDS - DAYS TO COMPLETE

	Forecast	Actual	Variance
Certificates	5	3	-2
Registrations	45	36	-9
Wills Notices	3	2	-1
Wills Searches	5	4	-1
Marriage Licences	1	1	0
Change of Name	11	21	10
Other	11	9	-2
Percentage of Units Completed	90%*	90%*	

*Adjusted downward from 95% to reflect the impact on turn around of workforce adjustment downsizing

The Agency met or performed better than all of its service standard targets in fiscal 2003. Of note are the substantial reductions in turnaround time on the event registration process and the certificate production process. These results are due primarily to the facsimile transmission of Notices of Birth and registrations of death from hospitals and funeral homes, and also, processing efficiencies of the VISION system.

3.4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

		Target	Actual	Variance
Courtesy	Excellent	60%	67%	7%
	Good	32%	26%	-6%
	Acceptable	6%	5%	-1%
	Below Standard	1%	1%	0%
	Poor	1%	1%	0%
Helpfulness	Excellent	58%	65%	7%
	Good	30%	28%	-2%
	Acceptable	8%	5%	-3%
	Below Standard	2%	1%	-1%
	Poor	2%	1%	-1%
Promptness	Excellent	58%	71%	13%
	Good	26%	21%	-5%
	Acceptable	10%	5%	-5%
	Below Standard	4%	1%	-3%
	Poor	2%	2%	0%

Survey returns indicated a better than targeted response on customer satisfaction surveys in all areas.

Responses indicating satisfaction (acceptable to excellent) positively exceeded targets by a net of five percent while dissatisfaction responses (below standard or poor) varied positively from target by a net of five percent. Overall there was a significant movement from acceptable and good responses to excellent in all categories.

A regional manager follows up all negative responses, and survey results are reviewed at quarterly management meetings. Actions taken as a result of survey data include workflow reviews to identify and correct processing problems, and staff training initiatives to improve courtesy and helpfulness.

4. REGISTRY OPERATIONS

4.1. BIRTH REGISTRY

4.1.1. Streamline the Receipt of Birth Notices from Hospitals, Physicians and Midwives

WHAT WE PLANNED

Working with the staff of the British Columbia Children's and Women's Health Centre, The Agency Plans to move forward with the detailed design of the interface necessary to allow for the electronic submission of Notices of Birth (NOB). It is anticipated that a pilot could be implemented as soon as details and interface requirements have been completed.

During this calendar year the guidebook for hospitals and physicians regarding the completion of the NOB will be completed. This will address many of the reporting issues that have been identified as important to the accurate reporting of birth statistics for the Province.

WHAT WE DID

Detailed discussions continued with the staff of the British Columbia Children's and Women's Health Centre. Issues remained with regard to the details of the design interface and further discussions were deemed essential before further progress could be realized. In addition, issues also existed within the Ministry of Health that required addressing to ensure the most efficient interface possible for the hospitals.

The Greater Victoria Hospital group Information Systems Branch also initiated discussions. This hospital group is completing a major computer system re-design and the Systems Branch expressed strong interest in pursuing an automated interface between these hospitals and the Vital Statistics Agency. Further discussions are underway at this time.

The guidebook for the completion of the NOB was completed and distributed to hospitals throughout the province. Very positive feedback was received from the user community and based on comments received, revisions will be incorporated in future editions of the guidebook.

WHAT THIS MEANS

While the pilot testing of an electronic interface for the NOB has not occurred, the discussions and interactions between the Agency staff and the hospital groups has

provided an excellent foundation for further developments. Work will continue on finalizing the detailed design of the interface methodology for this activity.

The guidebook has been well received, in addition legislative change has meant that issues related to the signing of paper NOB forms has been addressed which allows hospitals to quickly assemble the required information and ensure the NOB form is faxed to the Agency shortly after the birth event. The result is further improvements in the level of service that can be provided to parents with regard to birth certificates, while maintaining the data quality of medical information pertaining to the birth event.

FUTURE PLANS

Work will continue on the development of the electronic interface alternative to allow hospitals to directly submit their Notice of Birth documents to the Agency.

4.1.2. Obtaining Registrations of Births from Birth Parents Electronically

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency will seek to have an amendment to the Vital Statistics Act to eliminate the requirement for a mother who is not acknowledging a father to have her signature witnessed on the statutory declaration section of the form, thus eliminating one more barrier to future electronic submission of the registration. This change is of particular importance to single parents who find it difficult to attend an office to have their signature witnessed shortly after childbirth.

The Agency will also take steps towards accepting facsimile documents of all birth registration documents. In many cases parents have facsimile machines in their homes and the use of this submission alternative will result in an improved service level for our clients.

WHAT WE DID

A legislative amendment was made which modified the requirements related to the witnessing of a mother's signature in the statutory declaration section of the birth registration form. The form was redesigned removing the statutory declaration and replacing it with a statement made by the birth mother. This statement affirmed that birth mother did not intend to have the "father's" portion of the birth registration form completed and provided her rational for this action.

	The legal acceptance of facsimile birth registration forms was provided and the ability to accept faxed birth registrations directly from parents was acknowledged as an acceptable practice.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Single parents completing the birth registration form no longer require their signature to be witnessed. The forms could thus be mailed or faxed directly from the birth mother's home reducing an administrative burden
FUTURE PLANS	Pending further progress on the acceptance of electronic signatures by government, no further activities are planned with regard to this initiative. Developments resulting from changes in birth event participants as a result of reproductive technology initiatives (example "in vitro" fertilization using anonymous sperm donors) could result in the need to modify the birth registration form to reflect evolution of the information required about birth event participants.

4.1.3. Physician/Coroner and Funeral Home - Stillbirth Registrations

WHAT WE PLANNED	Proposed changes to the *Vital Statistics Act* to simplify the stillbirth registration process were circulated for review by Agency Management in preparation for inclusion in the next open call for legislation.
WHAT WE DID	Vital Statistics legislative proposals for the 2002 legislative session did not include the proposed stillbirth amendments as government priorities focused on deregulation initiatives and criminal record check Name Act amendments.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Proposed changes will result in simplification of the stillbirth registration process. By creating a more flexible reporting protocol, in light of the emotional circumstances, it would no longer be necessary for both parents to report or sign the registration document. Such changes will more closely match the death registration process currently in place in the province.
FUTURE PLANS	The proposed legislative change will be submitted for consideration in the 2003/2004 legislative sitting. Birth Registration Handling in Vital Statistics Offices

4.1.4. Birth Registration Handling in Vital Statistics Offices

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will explore alternative capture and storage media for its paper birth registration documents, which are currently being accessed from microfilm records. One of the methodologies under consideration will be the digitizing of records.
WHAT WE DID	The digitizing of records on-site or at the time of data entry offsite was investigated and proved to be an expense the Agency could not undertake given budget restraints. Rather, resources were allocated to verifying those records that have already been loaded on the computer system, and to the data entering of events that were not already captured.
WHAT THIS MEANS	There were approximately 90,000 birth records that were identified as being on our computer system in an index format only; microfilm copies of the associated event would have to be accessed if a certificate was requested. 49,000 of those records have now been updated and in a status ready for certificate production. A large number of records on the computer system, although completely loaded, were not in a certificate-ready status, requiring staff to access the original or microfilm when a certificate request is received. Those records have been verified for all events occurring between the years 1930 and 1975.
FUTURE PLANS	Updating of records from 1976 through 1998 will continue through the next fiscal year. The 41,000 remaining birth records requiring entry to the computer system will be captured if funding and resources are available. The Birth Registration will be modified to collect the Mother's email address where applicable, as another communication medium for clarifying or obtaining missing details.

4.2. DEATH REGISTRY

4.2.1. Funeral Homes

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency will solicit expressions of interest from Funeral Service providers to determine where a pilot project for a secure interface from funeral homes to the Agency's "VISION" computer registry program can be implemented.

WHAT WE DID

Following the demonstration of the early "alpha" version of the pilot interface at the Funeral Services Association of British Columbia in March of 2002, continuing development of the interface was initially limited due to other system priorities including the VISION data base update to Oracle 9i.

Additional development was also deferred pending impact assessment of forthcoming government policies respecting the E-Government Initiatives program.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The successful development of a secure and user-friendly web interface will allow real-time entry and registration of death events while at the same time integrating the timely issuance of burial permits and death certificates all within one application.

Further development of this project will be determined by the implication of potential policies presently being developed for common services, legislation and standards within the strategic framework of the E-Government Initiatives program.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will continue assign resources to further develop the web-interface for funeral service providers in accordance with applicable guidelines of the E-Government Initiatives program under the Premier's Chief Information Office. It is anticipated that a fully functioning production level demo will be available for presentation to the Funeral Services Association.

4.2.2. Coroner

WHAT WE PLANNED

Once the Coroner's Office has upgraded and completed testing of its new system, the Agency will initiate discussions on the business requirements for the development and implementation of a web-based exchange of data. This project will utilize the experience and

	expertise developed as a result of the pilot testing of the exchange of data with funeral homes in British Columbia.
WHAT WE DID	The Coroner's Office has not yet fully implemented its new computer system. Experience gained through pilot testing of the exchange of data with funeral homes has indicated that security requirements will necessitate the use of the government's new web portal infrastructure scheduled for implementation in the fall of 2003.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Once the Coroner's office has completed the upgrade of its computer system, it will be in a position in to further explore the possibility of electronic data exchange. Data exchange between the Coroner's Office and the BCVSA will also be dependent on the implementation of the government's web portal infrastructure. By both speeding up the receipt of finalized report on cause of death and by making the process easier for coroners and their staff to submit this information, medical data will be collected in a more timely manner. And processes are in place to ensure no finalized report data will be overlooked.
FUTURE PLANS	Once the Coroner's Office has upgraded and completed testing of its new system, the Agency will initiate discussions on the business requirements for the development and implementation of a web-based exchange of data.

4.2.3. Physician

WHAT WE PLANNED	The investigation of electronic methods for the delivery of medical certificates of death (MCOD) directly from physicians.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency continued to promote the submission of MCODs from physicians by facsimile, and are now receiving all of these forms, and the Registrations of Death by this means from funeral homes.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Funeral service providers are receiving documents from physicians on a timely basis, enabling them to register an event and submit all required documents to the Agency within an appropriate period. This then allows the Agency to capture the information and disseminate current data to health providers and others requiring immediate verification of death information.

FUTURE PLANS	Vital Statistics will continue to explore the ability to have the data captured and electronically submitted through to the VISION computer system from source.

4.2.4. Vital Statistics Offices

WHAT WE PLANNED	Experience with the digital imaging of death registrations and medical certificate of death forms has shown this to be an effective method for allowing staff to access these records quickly and easily. Detailed business analysis will be undertaken in the coming year of the potential to use "in-house" digital imaging of records as part of the process used to prepare the records for microfilming and final storage. Microfilm will remain the archival medium for these records but the potential to produce better quality microfilm images directly from the digital images, while simultaneously giving staff ready access to these important digitized records will be explored.
WHAT WE DID	Technical review of potential to use "in-house" digital imaging of records was completed. Equipment requirements were detailed and the impacts on staff resources were analyzed. Based on these reviews, it was determined that further analysis would be required including the potential to pilot this activity to ensure that both output results and staff training levels were such to make this a practical activity.
WHAT THIS MEANS	While technically feasible, concern remained as to the overall impact this ongoing activity could have on the specific work units that would be involved in this activity. Pending further analysis and the pilot testing of this activity, the project remains in a holding pattern.
FUTURE PLANS	During the coming fiscal year analysis will be undertaken to determine if a pilot project for the "in-house" digital imaging of records can be initiated. Based on the outcome of the pilot project, the ability to expand this activity can then be further explored. Based on the initiatives regarding electronic verification of birth records with agencies such as Passport, it will become critical that an effective means to verify birth registration information as contained on the birth registration form be developed to meet the timelines being considered for these electronic verification activities.

4.3. MARRIAGE REGISTRY

4.3.1. Religious Representatives

WHAT WE PLANNED	To accommodate routine temporary appointments for religious representatives, the Agency will look at producing a modified marriage register for recording and reporting single marriage ceremonies often conducted outside normal church facilities. A concentrated effort will be undertaken in the coming year to contact all religious bodies to secure updates on those designated by the body to perform marriages in the province. Business analysis will also be undertaken as to the feasibility for submission of updates and deletions to the listing of approved persons using electronic mail.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency developed and has implemented the use of a single event marriage register sheet, which is now utilized by religious representatives granted one-time temporary registration and for the recording of marriages occurring outside of a church or where multiple weddings may preclude the use of the primary register. An administrative and legislative review has determined that nothing would preclude the use of electronic mail for the purpose of transmitting updates, changes or cancellations for religious representatives providing an established and consistent format was utilized.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Churches are no longer faced with awkward scheduling and co-ordination difficulties which often arose from the requirement to utilize one marriage register to record multiple weddings which might take place at the same time and/or at different locations. The use of electronic mail for the transmission of routine administrative updates for religious representatives will provide an efficient and convenient alternative for governing authorities.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will distribute an administrative information circular to all religious bodies advising that notices of changes and cancellations of religious representative records may now be forwarded via PDF documents attached to e-mail addressed to the Religious Representative Registry.

The Agency will investigate further administrative cost-saving initiatives associated with the Religious Representative Registry such as discontinuing the issuance of formal "certificates" for the purpose of documenting registration under the Marriage Act.

4.3.2. Marriage Commissioners

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency planned to continue receiving Registration documents by facsimile with an aim toward creating an electronic means of data capture, and to continually review the Marriage Commissioner program to ensure quality public service.

WHAT WE DID

The Agency continued the ongoing recruitment of Marriage Commissioners, and amended the advertisements for vacancies to include a preference toward candidates with computer skills. Information on the internet was updated to include pictures and email addresses of marriage commissioners when available, as well as a mapping feature for use by clients.

The Marriage Commissioner certificate for presentation to couples following marriage was redesigned based on input from members of the program. As well, the marriage register utilized for recording of civil ceremonies was redesigned and distributed.

WHAT THIS MEANS

With the continued recruitment of individuals with up-to-date computer skills, we should be in a position to create and distribute an electronic program for the collection and electronic submission of marriage details.

With the upgrades to information on the internet, clients may now easily determine the location of civil marriage services, especially when the ceremony is to occur outside their home location. Having pictures available for some of the people with appointments gives clients an opportunity to select on the basis of gender and/or heritage, where a listing of names would previously not have provided them with that additional information. E-mail addresses provide yet another means of communication between both the clients and the Marriage Commissioners as well as for our communication with those persons appointed.

FUTURE PLANS

We will continue to recruit individuals with computer skills and Internet access in order to move forward with the plan of electronic delivery of marriage registration details. For

existing marriage commissioners we plan to move away from the issuance of the yearly officiant certificates and replace them with a formal identification card. We will also continue to promote the submission of marriage registration documents by facsimile to ensure the timely registration and issuance of the legal marriage certificate to clients.

For those individuals leaving the program after five or more years of service, we will design a plaque for recognition of service.

4.3.3. Marriage Licence Issuers

WHAT WE PLANNED	Based on experiences with a web-based program for funeral homes, the Agency will undertake the detailed business analysis related to an electronic interface between these private service providers and the Agency. The resulting connection will allow for direct electronic transmission of the supporting marriage application data directly to the Vital Statistics Agency.
WHAT WE DID	Web initiatives of the Agency were placed on hold pending the development of the Government of British Columbia's WEB Portal Project. The intent of this project is to provide users of government services with a common entry point and a format for interface. The government WEB Portal Project has experienced some unexpected delays in finalizing this delivery alternative and the Agency has chosen to await the finalization of this project before attempting to roll out web-based activities for its service providers.
WHAT THIS MEANS	While the Agency remains committed to providing service providers with the ability to utilize the WEB for direct and secure entry of vital event information, pending the finalization of the government WEB Portal Project further development and implementation was held in abeyance.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency remains committed to providing an electronic interface between its private service providers and the Agency. It is clearly recognized that such electronic interface will result in further service level improvements for clients of the Agency.

4.3.4. Marriage Certificates

Completed in 2001/2

4.4. CHANGE OF NAME REGISTRY

4.4.1. Change of Name Processing

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency would undertake a survey of other Canadian provinces to elicit interest in amalgamating the registration of name change and the request for issuance of new birth/marriage certificates for those individuals born or married in another jurisdiction. Working with the Ministry of the Solicitor General, the Agency proposed a change to the Name Act that would provide for notification of name change to the RCMP.
WHAT WE DID	At the Vital Statistics Council the proposal was made that BC would provide inter-provincial collection of fees for certificates following name change of individuals born in other provinces. The proposal was not readily accepted at this time. In partnership with the Solicitor General and other federal officials, implemented the requirement of fingerprinting and subsequent notification to RCMP, Ottawa, of adult clients changing their name.
WHAT THIS MEANS	While interest existed in many provinces/territories in providing clients with a "one stop" location for both filing a legal name change and receiving updated birth/marriage documents following the name change, this activity was deemed not practical at this time for a number of provinces/territories. As the process required full participation of all provinces/territories, it was necessary to suspend further activity on this initiative. With the implementation of the automated notification of the RCMP in Ottawa of all legal name changes (for adults) in British Columbia, the Canadian Police and Information Centre (CPIC) can be reviewed and where a match is found (and verified using the fingerprint information), this central registry of information on crimes and criminals is updated with the latest legal name for identified individuals. In all cases, regardless of whether a match occurs or not, all fingerprint records are returned to the client and no new fingerprint records are retained as a result of this legal name change activity.
FUTURE PLANS	In light of Sept 11, and heightened security issues, we will contact federal officials to determine if interest exists for

notification about individuals who have immigrated/taken residency in BC and have legally changed their name.

We will be investigating the ability to provide inter-provincial notification of name change by electronic means, thus moving away from postal services.

4.4.2. Archiving Supporting Documents

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will undertake the business analysis of the application of digitizing Change of Name files which will allow for their quick and easy access by staff as required.
WHAT WE DID	Staffing resources to undertake the business analysis of this activity were committed to other projects within the Agency. However, it is expected that work on the pilot testing of "in-house" digital imaging of records could have direct application to this initiative.
WHAT THIS MEANS	While staff resources were unavailable to complete the business analysis, the Agency remains strongly interested in pursuing the analysis to determine the viability of this activity to improving the speed with which investigation and analysis of questions related to past legal name changes can be completed.
FUTURE PLANS	Based on experience elsewhere in the Agency with regard to digital imaging, the Agency will undertake the completion of the business analysis of the application of digitizing Change of Name files.

4.4.3. Reports to External Registries

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency would continue to notify each province individually of legal name changes that affect events in their province and actively participate in developments that might occur under the National Routing System.
WHAT WE DID	Upon development of the pilot National Routing System by the Agency, Vital Statistics Council was canvassed for financial support in order to roll such a system out to the other provinces. Such support is not forthcoming at this time.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Although notification of name change by way of the electronic system is not imminent, the agency continues to provide notification of legal name changes that affect events in other provinces by way of the postal service.

FUTURE PLANS	The agency continues to support electronic notification of name changes to other provinces and continues to support notification by way of the National Routing System. In addition, the Agency will investigate notice being provided to Canadian Citizenship and Immigration of those individuals who have undergone a name change who were not born/married in Canada but procured a name change in this province.

4.4.4. Gazetteer of Change of Name

WHAT WE PLANNED	With the approval of the Privacy Commissioner, the Agency would amend legislation to allow electronic "publication" of name change for access by prescribed clients. The requirement for persons and the Agency to advertise name changes in the BC Gazette would no longer exist.
WHAT WE DID	Legislation was amended, eliminating the requirement to publish name changes in the BC Gazette. A survey was conducted to determine if outside agencies had regularly viewed the notices previously published by the Agency. Although the level of interest was minimal, an electronic extract will be made available upon request from a firm once they have been accredited by the Agency.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Name change applicants no longer are required to publish in either the BC Gazette or local area newspaper which has resulted in lower costs, in most cases, to the clients themselves. For those businesses who routinely reviewed the notice of name changes, an electronic extract can be made available upon request once accredited by the Agency.
FUTURE PLANS	This initiative is complete

4.5. WILLS NOTICE REGISTRY

4.5.1. Registration of Wills Notices

WHAT WE PLANNED	To increase the electronic filing and registration of Wills Notices, the Agency planned for receipt of 30,000 through electronic transmission and 5,000 through a secure Web application. The Agency will continue to work with Access BC in providing encouragement to legal professionals to use this electronic submission methodology for filing of Wills Notices.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency received and registered a total of 20,758 Wills Notices electronically through Access BC and the remainder being submitted through the mail. While work continued within the Agency on the development of the secure web application as another means of electronic submission, experience to date indicates that this alternative would not be appropriate, at this time, for the Wills Registry application.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Wills Notice electronic submissions did not increase to the levels originally forecasted by the Agency. While the legal profession continued to expand its use of this "portal access" alternative, many offices remained with the use of mail as their preferred method of submission.
FUTURE PLANS	Recognizing the importance of quickly being able to identify the location of deceased person's last will, the Agency will undertake a review and discussion with appropriate areas of a possible legislative change for the mandatory filing of the Registration of Wills Notice forms for those wills prepared by a legal professional. Such mandatory filing of a Wills Notice Registration form will provide important assistance to Public Trustees, estate administrators, executors, executrix or next of kin attempting to fulfill the legal obligations of settling an estate. Work will also be undertaken with Access BC to send a reminder to legal professionals regarding the advantages of the use of the electronic submission option available from Access BC.

4.5.2. Wills Notice Searches

WHAT WE PLANNED	To increase the electronic filing of Wills Notice Searches, the Agency planned for receipt of 7,000 such submissions, electronically through the Access BC and a further 1,000

through the secure Web application. The Agency will review the potential to modify the Wills Search result document to reduce staff effort in providing this service. Regulatory change will be undertaken which will provide the Agency with flexibility and increased efficiency with regard to the method of providing search results for use in the probating of estates.

WHAT WE DID

The Agency received a total of 5,635 Wills Notice Searches (42%) through the Access BC and the remainder through the mail. While work continued within the Agency on the development of the secure web application as another means of electronic submission, experience to date indicates that this alternative would not be appropriate, at this time, for the Wills Registry application. Through regulatory changes the requirements related to the specific format of the Search of Wills Notice form were modified to meet both client and Agency needs. The Access BC On-line Wills Registry system and VISION were both enhanced to enable a direct electronic load of Wills Search transactions directly to VISION, thereby by passing the need for manual data entry activities.

WHAT THIS MEANS

While almost one half of all Will Notice Search applications were received electronically, electronic submission did not increase to the level as originally forecasted by the Agency. The majority of those submitting their search requests continued to do so using the mail. The removal of the Search of Wills Notice form from Regulations provides the Agency greater flexibility with regard to the method of both receiving and providing search results. The direct interface of Wills Notice Search applications to VISION reduces the processing time by an additional two-days, as applications no longer have to be batched and sent offsite for data entry.

FUTURE PLAN

In 2003/04 the Agency will plan to implement the production of the Search of Wills Notice result document directly from VISION to assist with the further streamlining of the workflow processes in providing this service. The Agency will also continue to work with Access BC, to increase the use of this on-line system for submission of Search of Wills Notice applications thereby further improving service levels for clients using this submission option.

4.5.3. Vital Statistics Agency

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency plans to explore the use of digital imaging technology as an alternative electronic storage medium and will continue to develop applications utilizing digital image technology where feasible and appropriate but will concentrate its immediate efforts with regard to changes in required outputs used in the Search of Wills Notice application.
WHAT WE DID	Business analysis was carried out for digital imaging of Wills Notice Registrations and it was established that through a combination of digital images and electronic extracts from VISION the requirement to refer to microfilm could be reduced significantly thereby streamlining the process for providing this service.
WHAT THIS MEANS	While the utilization of digital images and electronic extracts from VISION could provide an effective solution for the automation of processing Will Search results, the cost/benefit analysis, prohibited the Agency from undertaking this project.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will focus on the automation of the production of Wills Notice Registrations forms from microfilm through the development of an electronic extract from VISION for Wills Notices with complete registration details. Digital Image technology development will be utilized where feasible and appropriate to streamline workflow within the Agency

5. SUPPORT SERVICES STRATEGY

5.1. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MEASUREMENT

5.1.1. Performance Measurement

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Support Services Branch of the Agency planned and completed a quality assessment survey of Agency operations and a quality improvement plan in fiscal 2000. The Branch also developed performance measures and performance-monitoring reports for the Adjudication/Registration Audit and HR/Confidential Services Units in 2002/03. In support of the government's initiative of improving accountability through performance monitoring the Agency planned to increase its involvement in government wide initiatives related to such improvements. In addition the Branch planned to investigate possibilities implementation of at least one new performance measure in 2003/04.

WHAT WE DID

During fiscal 2003 the Branch monitored performance measure reports developed during the previous year and determined that; a) results were consistent with measures already in place and; b) some of the new data provided more refined information concerning the results achieved by the Agency.

The Agency identified two additional measures that potentially be implemented in 2003/04. These are monitoring of Agency STIIP against government and industry STIIP results and monitoring of the number of certificates replaced due to errors on original documents issued.

In fiscal 2002/03 all managers and key project leaders in the Agency attended the government course on Redefining Financial and Program Management. An in house presentation was developed and presented to all staff to increase their awareness of the government's direction and the importance of accountability and performance measurement.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The Agency continues to be a leader in the implementation of performance management in government. The initiative in the Support Services Branch has resulted in performance information being key to results based decision making at the work unit level. The implementation of new measures such as STIIP monitoring will allow the Agency to

compare its performance with something other than pre-established targets as it presently does. As a result of its training initiatives Agency staff are much more aware of the direction of government and their role in meeting government accountability and performance objectives.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency plans to implement its STIIP monitoring performance measure as well as monitoring of certificate replacement activity in fiscal 2003/04. The Agency will continue to refine its performance measurement system in fiscal 04/05 with the implementation of activity based costing to provide a new baseline for its unit cost measure.

5.1.2. Financial and Performance Reporting

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency planned to prepare quarterly financial and performance forecasts for Treasury Board Staff as well as to prepare and distribute this annual Financial and Performance report to report on results outputs and outcomes on an annual basis.

WHAT WE DID

The Agency prepared and submitted all reports as required as well as meeting all the reporting requirements of government during and concluding the 2002 fiscal year.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The Agency has met its objectives and obligations related to financial and performance reporting.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will continue to meet its reporting plan as well as the reporting requirements of government and will continue to seek ways to enhance content and access to its financial and performance reports. The Agency is planning a major review of its planning and reporting documents during fiscal 03/04 for implementation in fiscal 04/05.

5.2. HISTORICAL VITAL EVENT RECORDS

5.2.1. Release of Historical Vital Event Records

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency planned to prepare microfilm copies and related vital events indices to ensure that vital event records can be released in the year in which they are eligible for such release. Birth records may be released 100 years after the birth event; marriage records 75 years after the marriage event; and, death records 20 years after the death event. The Agency plans to oversee the completion of the second phase of the on-line index for baptismal records from 1837 to 1900.

WHAT WE DID

Births up to and including to 1902, Marriages to 1927 and deaths to 1982 are now available in select libraries, at the British Columbia Archives Reading Room, and through the Genealogical Society of Utah. All of these events may be searched on the Internet using the vital records index search facilities on the BC Archives Web site. Through a partnership with BC Archives and Vital Chek Network these records are also available for purchase by credit card and delivery by e-mail.

The second phase of the on-line index for baptismal records was undertaken by reviewing the original documents on microfilm and then key entering into a database the parent's names, original ancestral aboriginal name and tribal affiliation for each individual's record.

Births that occurred between 1947 and 1955 were microfilmed from the original registration providing the Agency with a new working copy and the BC Archives with a silver master.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Vital event records were released in accordance to prescribed legislation and are ready available to the public through the Internet.

The on-line index for the release of baptismal records is over 40 percent complete. The benefit of the completion of this project to British Columbians and researchers throughout Canada will be improved access to baptism/birth information relating to First Nations individuals and information on the birth of children of settlers prior to the commencement of vital events registrations in 1872.

Through the completion of the microfilming project, the Agency can provide high quality copies of birth records up to 1955 while ensuring that secure backups of this material are preserved in a full archival environment.

FUTURE PLAN

To continue maintaining microfilm records and vital event indices as necessary to ensure that vital event records can be released in the year in which they are eligible for release and to oversee the completion of the second and final phase of the recording of the on-line index for baptismal records

5.2.2. Restoration of Historical Indices

WHAT WE PLANNED	During 1997/98 it was discovered that tapes containing indices to historical birth records from 1900 to 1940 had been damaged. The Agency plans to continue the restoration of the damaged indexes for the period 1919 to 1929 utilizing available resources within the work unit.
WHAT WE DID	Extensive searching by Information and Resource Management located backup historical research tapes for births indexes from 1919 to 1929. It was determined the indexes contained on these tapes were of sufficient detail and contained the required elements to allow this information to be loaded directly onto VISION.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The birth indexes for the period 1919 to 1929 were recreated and the information loaded into VISION. The restoration of these indexes has completed the entire birth registry index for VISION and has virtually eliminated the requirement to refer to microfiche to locate a birth event.
FUTURE PLANS	Work will be undertaken to locate and analyze Death and Marriage indexes from 1900 to 1930. Depending on the availability of this information, these indexes can then be loaded into VISION.

5.2.3. Historical Birth and Death Project

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will complete the data entry of required certificate information for births back to 1940 to facilitate automated birth certificate production. The emphasis will then shift to death records to enable a further expansion of the automated matching of death event information to birth records.
WHAT WE DID	Birth/Death matching reports were developed to electronically match births to current deaths. Business analysis of the birth/death matching in 2001/02 identified deaths between1930 to 1984 require additional data entry of key registration information elements to complete this project. It was also identified Out of Province deaths indicators may have been corrupted during past data conversions which will require further work to ensure this information is completely present.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Birth/Death matching is completed on a daily basis providing assurance birth registrations are being flagged as soon as the death is reported to the Agency. Death

	registrations will require additional data entry of key elements of information to allow for automated birth/death matching and information on file with Statistics Canada will be required to ensure all Out of Province death indicators are appropriately flagged.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will initiate a project to capture the required information for matching purposes and working with the other provinces/territories in Canada along with staff from Statistics Canada will obtain the necessary death information relating to British Columbia born individuals on file in Ottawa.

5.2.4. Data Quality Initiatives

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Registration Audit Unit planned to develop processes for the early detection of errors and the introduction of appropriate education and information actions to reduce the number of errors received on registration documents. A pilot project will be initiated for the electronic transmission of Notice of Birth information directly from hospitals.
WHAT WE DID	Additional data quality edit checks were implemented for the Notice of Birth to identify missing or potentially incorrect values for elected data fields. On-line management reports were developed within VISION to provide the ability to analyze the type and number of validation errors for specific data elements within an event type. Based on this analysis, appropriate follow-up was undertaken which resulted in the submission of better data quality from vital statistics registrars and medical professionals. The Agency continued to work with selected hospitals to further refine the business requirements for an Electronic Notice of Birth system.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The implementation of additional data quality edit checks has eliminated the requirement for manual auditing of the Notice of Birth forms prior to its data entry and as a result workflow processes have been further streamlined. On-line management reports will track repetitive errors in the registration process and will provide assistance for ensuring improved data quality. To date, a Project Charter Document has been initiated and steps are being taken to undertake this pilot project.
FUTURE PLANS	To continue to monitor document submissions and to take appropriate corrective action to reduce the number of invalid data elements on vital event documents received by

the Agency. The Agency will continue to move forward on the initiative for electronic transmission of Notice of Birth information with those hospitals and regional districts that are interested in supporting these functions.

5.3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

5.3.1. Transfer Payroll Function from Ministry of Health

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency planned to transfer payroll activities from the Ministry to establish full financial independence.
WHAT WE DID	Discussions with the Ministry Senior Financial Officers were undertaken; however, the government initiative to centralize the entire government payroll function overtook these efforts.
WHAT THIS MEANS	As payroll has now been centralized as part of the Ministry of Management Services our objective has been partially met as the Agency will be independent of the Ministries of Health for payroll services.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will now seek to negotiate its own service level agreement with the Ministry of Management Services for payroll services.

5.3.2. Policy and Procedure Documentation

WHAT WE PLANNED	Agency plans included bringing its internal financial policy and procedure documentation up to date to reflect the implementation of CAS, Vision and financial policies regarding capitalization.
WHAT WE DID	Financial Policy and procedures have now been documented and are continuously being updated to reflect the implementation of the initiatives identified above. The implementation of additional initiatives such as purchase cards, and I-Expenses, has resulted in significant changes in the financial management landscape of government. has and will affect the documentation effort for a considerable period of time to come.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The Agency continues to be on track in implementing government financial initiatives and ensuring that they are properly documented to form an integral part of Agency operations and employee performance. As government financial policy and financial management practice evolves the documentation project has become an ongoing effort.

FUTURE PLANS	The unit will continue to identify areas where written procedures are required and review activities to ensure written documentation reflects actual or required practice. There will be a focus on ensuring Agency procedures reflect Core Policy Manual requirements and connect our program managers to government policy.

5.3.3. E-Commerce

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency planned to promote the use of e-commerce and other alternative payment processes for its services in order to reduce reliance on the acceptance of personal cheques for payment. (Personal cheque processing and the dealing with NSF cheques is labour intensive and costly
WHAT WE DID	Promotion of the acceptance of credit cards, and debit cards, the acceptance of applications over the phone, by facsimile and through Access BC has resulted in an increase of alternative payment methods being utilized in almost 40% of the Agencies service transactions.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Fewer cheques require processing resulting in somewhat less related work. The incidence of NSF cheques decreased initially, however this has now stabilized and the incidence of NSF cheques now appears to be constant.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to promote alternate methods of payment until it becomes feasible to restrict acceptance of personal cheques for services requested.

5.4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES

5.4.1. Human Resources/ Confidential Services

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency planned to establish independent human resources services to promote a more effective delivery of corporate HR policies and procedures including recruitment, classification, labour relations and occupational health and safety.
WHAT WE DID	The manager responsible continued to apply human resources best practices in the delivery of client services to all Agency personnel based on existing constraints.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Human resource services were delivered with the greatest efficiency possible throughout the creation of a new central HR Agency to replace the existing Public Service Employee Relations Commission (PSERC). This re-

	organization impacted a number of higher-level services traditionally delivered by PSERC and service performance levels declined accordingly. Based on media released by officials responsible for the transition, a high standard of service excellence is to be expected by the new BC Public Service Agency.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to move toward a greater level of autonomy. It is anticipated that the creation of the new central HR Agency will provide a significant opportunity for the Agency to assume greater levels of authority in the delivery of HR services. The CEO and HR Manager will endeavour to establish a service level agreement with the new central HR Agency that will establish these new authorities yet maintain the level of support required to provide service excellence.

5.4.2. Consolidation of Adoption Indices

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Confidential Services Branch planned on linking all adoption indices through the creation of a unified MS Excel database to allow the efficient retrieval of adoption related statistics that enhance the ability of the Agency to respond to information requests from a variety of clientele.
WHAT WE DID	Although begun in fiscal 1999/00, this remains an ongoing project as there are 70,000 records involved in the process and the resources were unable to be specifically allocated to this project based on budgetary impacts.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Adoption records maintained by the Agency are intact but have been recorded in a variety of formats. This does not affect the operations or delivery of services to Agency clientele but does not allow the desired statistical analysis.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to work towards linking all adoption indices within existing resources until complete.

6. REGIONAL SERVICES STRATEGY

6.1. SERVICE DELIVERY AND EFFICIENCY

6.1.1. Community Service Levels

WHAT WE PLANNED

Vital Statistics continues to evaluate alternatives for service delivery and will expand the use of private sector service delivery options as opportunities occur and demand for these service alternative increase.

WHAT WE DID

Ongoing monitoring of service levels and statistical reporting provided by the Agency VISION computer application supported a number recruitment and appointment initiatives in the Lower Mainland and Greater Victoria. An additional six full service insurance company outlets were appointed as marriage licence issuers in Burnaby, White Rock, North Vancouver and West Vancouver.

In the Greater Victoria area, successful negotiations with Coast Capital Insurance Services Ltd. and U-Select Financial & Insurance Services Ltd. resulted in the designation of 13 additional individual locations to provide Marriage Licence Issuer Services as well as four other locations in Duncan, Lake Cowichan, Mill Bay and Nanaimo.

During the 2002/2003 fiscal year the following service provider appointments essential to effective and convenient customer service were made:

- Eight additional District Registrars
    - assist clients with the completion of birth registration forms and the completion of statutory declarations associated with correcting key vital event information
- 34 new Funeral Service Provider staff appointed as Vital Statistics Registrars
    - enable deaths to be registered in the community on a timely basis – in many cases providing service on a seven day per week, twenty-four hour a day basis
- 62 Government Agent Staff appointments (Vital Statistics Registrar & Marriage Licence Issuer)

- service providers located in established Government Agent offices ensure that clients can obtain vital statistics services in their home communities

- 168 Private Marriage Licence Issuers
  - many of the new appointments provided expanded service hours in the Victoria and Greater Vancouver areas

- 70 Private Marriage Commissioners
  - ensure efficient service delivery to couples in their home locales and at times which best meet their needs and wishes

- 132 Temporary Marriage Commissioners

WHAT THIS MEANS

The Agency continues to expand it's service delivery points in order to effectively increase the public's access to its services. The utilization of private firms already recognized for their customer oriented services and well established presence in their communities allows the Agency to continue to explore service options outside of normal government service delivery paradigms.

The Agency has ensured that it maintains the level of service and access demanded by the public while at the same time taking innovative steps to reduce the direct costs to government in doing so.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will continue to evaluate alternatives for service delivery and will actively explore and expand the use of private sector service providers into the interior and northern regions of the province.

6.1.2. Alternative Service Delivery Sources

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency's initiative will be the expansion of services into the private sector throughout the province. In addition to this, we will investigate additional service offerings through the Internet.

WHAT WE DID

A number of agreements were made with private insurance companies to provide marriage licence issuer services in both the mainland and Vancouver Island areas.

	The Agency's Internet site was expanded to include a number of forms for clients' easy access and subsequent submission.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The Agency significantly expanded service to the public by having marriage licence iss :ance available evenings and weekends in a number of locations. As an example, services have expanded by 13 locations in the City of Victoria.
FUTURE PLANS	Continue the initiative to move Government Offices out of this service delivery area. In addition to providing a greater range of forms available to clients, we plan to provide a birth registration on-line for parents to complete, print and submit.

6.1.3. Vital Chek

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency and its partners plan to continue marketing the Vital Chek credit card payment option. Recoveries from the sale of genealogical images will be used to create additional digital images to further enhance this service. Work will be undertaken in the coming year, in cooperation with Vital Chek to utilize additional technology alternative which will allow all births (1872 to 1901), along with death records (1924 to 1981), marriage records (1924 to 1926), and overseas (World War II) death records to become available on a "next business day" basis, further expanding the genealogical search information alternatives for our clients.
WHAT WE DID	In cooperation with Vital Chek, all historical records births (1872 to 1902), along with death records (1872 to 1982), marriage records (1872 to 1927), and overseas (World War II) death records are available over the Internet. Requests submitted using secure WEB interfaces are processed and the resulting TIF images returned by e-mail to the client regardless of their location throughout the world.
WHAT THIS MEANS	British Columbia remains the leading vital event Agency in North American (and potentially the world) in making its historical vital events readily available to genealogists using this modern electronic medium. Feedback from users has been extremely popular and sales during the past twelve months have reached a new level of success.

FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to work with Vital Chek to ensure this service is expanded as additional years of vital event records become available for release.

6.2. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

6.2.1. Millennium Certificates

Completed in 2001/2 fiscal year

6.2.2. Commemorative Marriage Certificates

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will review expansion of eligibility provisions to allow specified family members to make application for commemorative marriage certificates.
WHAT WE DID	Proposed legislative changes if approved, will allow the Agency Chief Executive Officer to authorize and stipulate the conditions for release of an electronic extract in the form of a commemorative marriage certificate.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Approved release authority will allow the active promotion of this service to target audiences such as parents and friends.
FUTURE PLANS	Pending legislative approval of release authority, the Agency will investigate and initiate a marketing campaign including possible new product development to promote the availability and desirability of the commemorative marriage certificate.

6.2.3. Marriage Commissioner's Marriage Ceremony Memento

Completed in 2001/2 fiscal year

6.2.4. Partnership Registry

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will monitor trends in the evolution of the family structure as it is recognized in Canada and will continue to respond to the legislative priority of the government with a view to introducing options that may be appropriate for British Columbia
WHAT WE DID	In light of court actions taken by same sex couples in the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, the Government of Canada has undertaken a review of the eligibility for marriage in Canada. At the same, the Agency undertook a review of actions taken in other

	provinces, in various United States jurisdictions and throughout the world with regard to the recognition of family units.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Depending on the outcome of the review being conducted by the Government of Canada, eligibility for marriage could be changed to include same sex couples. In addition, while British Columbia was one of the first provincial jurisdictions to identify a Partnership Registry as one means of allowing both common law opposite sex and same sex couples to independently register their relationship, no further action has been taken in British Columbia with regard to implementing this option. In the meantime, New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta have all implemented a partnership registry.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will await the Federal decision with regard to marriage eligibility and could bring forward a proposal for a Partnership Registry for British Columbia.

6.2.5. Plastic (credit card type) Birth Certificates

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency plans to keep this option open pending the resolution of security issues and the development of technologies to make the issuance of new types of identification documents practical.
WHAT WE DID	We know that Australia has started producing picture id birth certificates. This option continues to be an area the Agency is considering. We are monitoring the discussions on national identity and reviewing the literature on biometrics. There are a number of security issues to be addressed before we can actively pursue issuing plastic birth certificates.
FUTURE PLANS	Will proceed when security review has been completed and a plan is deemed viable.

6.2.6. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Telephone System

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency continued to investigate alternate and electronic methods for providing information to clients.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency reviewed the Government of British Columbia initiative with regard to use of IVR in addressing client requirements. Preliminary analysis indicated that the alternative was not cost effective for the particular application within Vital Statistics.

WHAT THIS MEANS	Further investigation will be required to determine the best electronic method for use by clients and Vital Statistics.
FUTURE PLANS	Continue to investigate the use of IVR to allow clients to report lost and stolen certificates on a 7/24 basis

6.2.7. Central Clearinghouse Function

Task completed in 2001/2 fiscal year.

6.2.8. Validation of birth certificates

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will begin acquisition of the hardware necessary to support the electronic validation of personal information on birth certificates by those agencies such as Passport Canada and Human Resources Development Canada who use them in the recognized conduct of their business. Detailed discussions will be undertaken to design and test, through a pilot study, a configuration that includes specific security issues and time sensitive transactions. The Agency will also review a process for linking birth certificate records directly to the vital event record itself. In this manner certificates that are reported as lost or stolen can readily be flagged and action taken to prevent their fraudulent use.
WHAT WE DID	A Memorandum of Understanding and Privacy Impact Assessment were developed by the Agency to document a Pilot Project with Passport Canada. In addition, a Letter of Intent was signed with Human Resource Development Canada in February of 2002, resulting in the provision of an initial contribution-funding amount for a planned pilot project. In anticipation of a start date of April 1, 2003 the Agency established formal Canada Passport pilot project working committees and proceeded to develop the necessary business processes and user-testing and integration protocols. Passport Canada however, was unable to meet its aggressive target implementation date. A draft Project Initiation Document was prepared to outline the parameters of the project to document lost or stolen certificates.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The Vital Statistics Agency and Passport Canada have initiated and now established the fundamental

	administrative, operational and technical infrastructures to implement the pilot project for validation of British Columbia birth certificates submitted in support of passport applications.
FUTURE PLANS	The British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency will support Canada Passport in meeting its revised implementation schedule for the pilot project. Upon completion of the pilot project, the Agency will proceed with an extensive post pilot review for the purposes of evaluating its subsequent participation in the federal government E-Links program for a national validation system. A detailed report will also be presented to the Vital Statistics Council for Canada and made available to the other provinces. A formal project will be initiated to establish the business processes and supporting technological infrastructure to allow the linking and operational recording of lost and stolen certificates. Statutory authority will be established under legislative proposals to be submitted for the 2003/2004 session of the legislature.

6.2.9. Marriage Commissioner Selection and Training

WHAT WE PLANNED	To monitor the levels of demand for Marriage Commissioners and undertake appropriate recruitment action. New recruitment practices piloted in the Vancouver Island region would be written up in policy and implemented throughout the Province to affirm the equality and fairness of the selection process to all involved.
WHAT WE DID	The entire selection process was detailed in a policy document and circulated to personnel involved in recruitment.
WHAT THIS MEANS	We now have a standard in place from the initial advertisement of a vacancy through to the appointment of an individual to the position. The documented standards provide a process that is clearly defined and open to audit, and has been proven successful after a review by the Office of the Ombudsman.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to monitor the levels of demand and the quality of service being provided. There has been significant change to the program over the years, and additional training will be required.

6.3. POLICY AND PROCEDURES

6.3.1. Legislative Review

WHAT WE PLANNED

The Agency will review its legislation in accordance with its established three year de-regulation plan and operationally implement those changes submitted for the 2002 legislative session including major changes to the Name Act whereby adult persons who are changing their name will submit to fingerprinting and having their criminal record checked.

The Agency will be an active participant in the national review of vital statistics legislation being undertaken by the Vital Statistics Council for Canada. The Agency will also participate as a member of the Council in preparing submissions to the Uniform Law Commission for a possible review and updating of the Uniform Vital Statistics Act.

WHAT WE DID

Primary Agency legislative change proposals affecting the Vital Statistics Act, Name Act and Wills Act were passed into law by the 2002 sitting of the legislature.

Major changes are summarized below:

- de-regulation initiative amendment of the Name Act to dispense with the requirement to advertise intent and completion of legal changes of name;
- de-regulation initiative amendment of the Wills Act to allow CEO form designation;
- de-regulation initiative amendment of the Vital Statistics Act to remove the requirement for single mother's to complete an affidavit for registration of their child's birth;
- amendment to the Name Act requiring fingerprinting and criminal record check for all adult applicants;
- amendment to the Vital Statistics Act to permit the addition of paternity information to a birth record by order of the courts;
- amendment to the Survivorship and Presumption of Death Act and Vital Statistics Act to permit the vital event registration of presumption of death orders;

- amendment of the Vital Statistics Act and Wills Act to change the name of the Division of Vital Statistics in order to reflect current Agency status and management designations;

- amendment to the Vital Statistics Act to authorize and facilitate the submission of notifications of birth by hospitals where no attending physician is available.

The Agency completed and submitted updates to a number of legislative environmental surveys in preparation for the Vital Statistics Council for Canada's submission to the Uniform Law Conference.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The major legislative initiatives undertaken by the Vital Statistics Agency represent a major step in both de-regulation and easing of the regulatory burden as well as increasing public confidence in the security and integrity of their personal information.

The level of current public concern with matters of security and protection also imposes upon the Agency a responsibility to actively participate in any provincial and national initiatives to safeguard personal information and identity. It is important that the necessary statutory flexibility exists to allow the Agency to respond to such initiatives in a pro-active manner.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will identify and initiate those orders-in-council required to make the consequential changes necessitated by the previous legislative amendments. The Agency also plans to review all aspects of the current statutory information release and access provisions of the Vital Statistics Act in order to identify legislative amendments necessary to accommodate security initiatives and recommendations of such bodies as the Federal/Provincial/Territories Council on Identity and the Security Committee of the Vital Statistics Council for Canada.

In addition, the Agency will be reviewing the Marriage Act in accordance with its established three-year de-regulation plan.

6.3.2. Guidebooks

WHAT WE PLANNED

Due to legislative changes, the Agency planned to review all guidebooks to ensure continuity between new

	legislation and information provided to service providers. Moving the information to the WEB for ease of access will be examined.
WHAT WE DID	All Vital Statistics policies have been included on the Agency's intranet site for staff use. The Agency's multi-cultural guides to services such as registration of birth, marriage and legal name change in BC are available in four languages. These guides are written in a format in which the English translation is also provided; they are available on the Internet.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Lower costs are incurred by the Agency for printing and the guides are now available to a wider audience.
FUTURE PLANS	Recent legislative changes require that a review of guidebooks be undertaken again this year. The Agency will continue investigating a means of electronically disseminating this information to service providers.

6.4. AUDIT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.4.1. Surveys/Customer Satisfaction

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency planned to continue utilizing the existing customer survey program for the general public who order services and those who utilize the civil marriage officiant program. In addition, the Agency would target specific user groups such as those clients utilizing our data services to maintain service excellence in all areas.
WHAT WE DID	We continued to distribute customer survey forms with approximately 25% of all services delivered. Personal follow-up with the client was undertaken for any surveys where a concern was raised and contact information was provided.
WHAT THIS MEANS	By continually capturing and reviewing client comments, we capture the information required to modify products and processes, as well as identify areas where additional training or resources may be deemed necessary to meet our clients' needs.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will investigate the production of an on-line survey form that could be electronically submitted by target groups.

6.4.2. Data Standards and Quality/Edit Checks

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency plans to continue with its current activities directed toward data quality improvement through the life of this business plan. With the implementation of the new Data Warehouse, there will be expanded capabilities to use electronic edit checks to identify erroneous data.
WHAT WE DID	Weekly edit checks continued to be made of all key data elements collected by the Agency. Using these in-depth analysis reports, staff can concentrate their efforts on the problems so identified, and to undertake corrections in a timely fashion. Data validation rules have been implemented in the Data Warehouse, but reporting evaluation results has not yet been implemented, as this requires setting up additional reporting software.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Pre-vetting of documents and direct liaison with hospital personnel, physicians and coroners has greatly reduced the error ratio on key data elements in vital events. The result is more accurate data available sooner for use both internally within the Agency and for our clients who use this data in their day to day work activities.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to expand and refine data validation and cross-correlation edit check rules. Liaison with reporting sources will continue to improve the timeliness, accuracy and completeness of data provided. Formal data exchange arrangements with external data sources that capture the same or related data will be used to confirm and augment data held in the Agency's registries.

6.4.3. Performance Measurements

Task completed in 2001/2 fiscal year

6.4.4. Enforcement/Offence Provisions

WHAT WE PLANNED	Research work will be undertaken to develop a matrix of the offence provisions currently in place in the Provinces and Territories. Other Provinces and Territories will also be in a position to share their experiences relative to the usefulness of their offence provisions.
WHAT WE DID	As a consequence of the striking of specific co-ordinating committees at the national level in the form of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council for Canada and the Security Committee of the Vital Statistics Council for

Canada, the Agency scheduled no unilateral changes to its offence provisions for the period 2002/2003.

The Agency conducted a review of existing offence provisions currently applicable to the primary area of concern, namely fraudulent and criminal use of vital event records and the registration system. It was determined that the current Criminal Code of Canada does in fact contain sufficiently specific offences as they relate to the vital event registration system in Canada and the fraudulent use of those records and extracts or certificates.

WHAT THIS MEANS

While some jurisdictions moved to incorporate additional or strengthened offence provisions within their provincial statutes, the Agency has determined that more appropriate application and enforcement of existing Criminal Code offences will be more effective as they represent a national standard and reflect the criminal offence status of such actions or activity.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will review its own legislation to determine whether existing compliance offence provisions may warrant amendment to increase the penalty amounts beyond those currently stipulated at the default $2000 amount.

7. INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Director of Vital Statistics is mandated by sections 43 and 44 of the *Vital Statistics Act* to publish and distribute statistical information in the public interest respecting the contents of the Agency's registries and to publish an annual statistical report on vital events registered during the preceding calendar year. The Manager, Information and Resource Management Branch, directs several small niche groups, each with its own area of expertise, but with overlapping responsibilities in the overall development of research products, to meet this legislated obligation.

The groups fall into general categories responsible for:

- Data management,
- Medical Coding,
- Data Analysis,
- Data Dissemination; and
- Publication and Internet Services.

The major projects undertaken by these groups are documented on the following pages.

7.1. DATA WAREHOUSE PROJECT

WHAT WE PLANNED	Plans are to expand access to the data warehouse, initially to a small group of external clients; expand the capabilities of the system to enable specialized types of analysis; configure Oracle Discoverer as an end-user tool for ad-hoc querying; investigate mapping software for the system; incorporate health-related data from other sources to expand analysis capabilities
WHAT WE DID	A working group committee was formed of external clients. This group was given access to VISTA initially using Oracle Express client software as the end-user tool, and later using Oracle Express Web Agent. Vista was expanded to include a full suite of mortality and natality measures to enable users to perform detailed analysis. Research was done to investigate the feasibility of time trend analysis of various mortality measures. Work continues on the Oracle Discoverer component. The Agency is investigating options for integration of mapping software within the system, particularly for the Web Agent interface and has identified a promising tool for this feature. The agency has incorporated some health related data from external sources for use in several reports and publications.

WHAT THIS MEANS	A growing number of external users will be able to use VISTA for producing a rich set of mortality and natality measures. As the Discoverer end-user layer matures, the agency's researchers will be able to produce ad-hoc reports and datasets more efficiently. Time Trend analysis and Mapping will further enhance the end-users ability to analysis and interpret the Vital Event information contained in the warehouse.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency plans to expand external access of the data warehouse to a much larger group of external clients within Government using Oracle Web Agent as the primary delivery tool. The Oracle Discoverer End-User layer will be completed so that any ad hoc data request may be answered in-house using this tool. Marriage Measures will be added to data warehouse offerings. Summary data drawn from the Health Status Registry will be made available from the data warehouse. Chloropleth mapping features will be added to the Warehouse end-user tool set. The data warehouse will receive an upgrade to the Government's GAMES technology base and Oracle 9i.

7.2. MEDICAL CODING

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Medical Coding Unit will continue to work on improving the data quality of Medical Certifications of Death received from physicians and coroners. The group will strive to obtain more comprehensive information on Physicians Notice of Birth. Updating of software and related indexes will be ongoing, ensuring the most current coding practices are in place.
WHAT WE DID	Continued to communicate by telephone and letters with physicians and coroners, reinforcing the need for timely and accurate information. Mail out of Coroners and Physicians Handbook to all coroners, to ensure availability of correct instructions. Discussions and planning of improved methods of communication with hospitals and physicians re NOBs. Several medical coding updates from NCHS were implemented.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The Medical Coding Unit endeavours to provide the most complete, medically accurate data possible, to assist the Vital Statistics Agency in fulfilling it's mandate to provide statistics for end users.
FUTURE PLANS	On going dialogue with physicians and coroners via the Chief Coroner will endeavour to improve clinical data on

the Medical Certification of Death and Physician's Notice of Birth documents.

7.3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION

WHAT WE PLANNED

Now that the initial work has been completed on ICD-9 to10 transition, the focus will be broadened to include all birth data and issues relating to the Health Status Registry. This will involve the recoding of birth data as was done for mortality data. There will be ongoing efforts to ensure the validity of our transition work. All current and future data products will be based on the ICD10 coding system.

WHAT WE DID

In concert with the continued updating of the classification system, the Agency has made advancements in moving data analysis programming to the new VISTA data warehouse suite. All Vital Statistics Quarterly Digests and the 131st Annual Report were produced from VISTA, as well as the majority of 'ad hoc' data requests.

As coding software (SuperMICAR and ACME) updates are provided by NCHS and Statistics Canada, ongoing monitoring of software output is carried out via application of edit rules and manual revision of output as required.

The Vital Statistics Agency continues to be actively involved in the preparation of various reports that present and analyze British Columbia's vital event data. The following is a list of the most recent publications by the Agency:

British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health Planning (produced for the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada). *Regional Analysis of Health Statistics for Status Indians in British Columbia, 1991–2001, Birth Related and Mortality Summaries, British Columbia and Health Regions.*

British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health Planning. *Selected Vital Statistics and Health Status Indicators: One Hundred Thirtieth Annual Report 2001.*

British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health Planning. *Health Status Registry Report, Congenital Anomalies, Genetic Defects, Selected Disabilities, British Columbia to 2000.*

British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency, Ministry of Health Planning. *Pregnancy Counts and Rates by Age Groups by Health Region, British Columbia, 1992 to 2000*

Kashaninia, Z. "Accidental Falls Mortality in British Columbia, 1990–2000," *Quarterly Digest*, 11 (3 & 4), May, 2002.

Kashaninia, Z., Pelletier R., "Leukemia Mortality in British Columbia, 1986-2000" *Quarterly Digest*, 12 (2), December, 2002.

FUTURE PLANS

The data dissemination group will monitor the quality of its products as the new systems evolve to ensure its rigorous standards and efficiency are maintained. In addition to its data dissemination role, maintenance of data quality will continue to be of primary importance and will comprise a central focus of activities planned for the coming year.

7.4. DESKTOP AND INTERNET SERVICES

WHAT WE PLANNED

The desktop and Internet services group will continue to support the Agency's publication requirements.

WHAT WE DID

This group coordinated the final presentation of all major publications of the Agency. Additionally all materials were prepared for electronic distribution on the Internet.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Having a single focal point for the creation of both electronic and traditional published material ensures a high standard of quality, consistency and efficiency.

FUTURE PLANS

The desktop and Internet services group will continue to support the Agency's publication requirements.

8. LABOUR RELATIONS STRATEGY

The British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) represents the majority of employees within the Agency, while the British Columbia Nurses' Union (BCNU) represents a small number of Community Nurses. Each of these parties have their rights and responsibilities outlined in collective and component agreements that are made available to them upon employment within the Public Service.

In accordance with Section 2 of the British Columbia Labour Relations Code, the Agency encourages co-operative participation between the employer and employees' representative unions in resolving workplace issues, adapting to changes in the economy, developing workforce skills and promoting workplace productivity. To encourage the timely implementation of these objectives, the Agency has secured a human resources manager to act as a conduit to address any issues and concerns between the employer and employees.

Specific goals attached to the maintenance of effective employee relations include:

- the responsible provision of collective agreement interpretation to all employees;
- the timely resolution of grievances where practical;
- the maintenance of strong working relationships with Union representatives;
- establishing a balance between corporate goals and employee well-being; and
- the ongoing requirement for clear lines of communication between the parties.

The Agency continued to follow the Labour Relations principles described above in fiscal 2002/2003.

9. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency planned to create an environment of continuous learning by keeping current with new ideas and technology and by aligning individual training needs with corporate and departmental strategic plans.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency continued to administer the booking of employees for all training programs as required by management. This included budget administration, research into training requirements and determining availability of the appropriate resources. Budget expenditure was significantly greater in 2002/2003 due to the unexpected requirement for advanced information technology (IT) training.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Since the elimination of the Agency's own training coordinator in 2002, the HR coordinator position has maintained the required administrative functions. The need for an internal resource continues to exist to best address the unique requirements of Agency personnel. IT training remains a variable expenditure due to changes in developing technologies and the requirements of select Agency personnel to maintain current skills.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will employ the services of external vendors as required to meet specific program training needs and obtain generic training needs through the new central government organization. At the same time, the Agency will review the possibility of re-establishing a partial training function within existing resources. IT training needs will continue to be monitored and budgetary adjustments made as required.

10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

The role of the Information Technology Group is to improve and maintain the quality of operational and management information available to the Vital Statistics Agency and to enable new and innovative business solutions through effective computer-based technology. This includes: recommending standards related to the data application systems and technology; the review and application of Ministry and Government prescribed standards and plans; developing and maintaining application systems; deploying technology; operating computers and networks; and monitoring system assets and expenditures. A Systems Manager oversees this Group.

During fiscal 2002/2003, the IT Group maintained the major mission-critical operational system for the entire Agency (VISION), the Agency's data warehouse (VISTA), and several smaller applications for specific area (Funeral Home system, Marriage Licence Issuer system, VSTATS [the Agency's internal business information database], and controlled Paper Stock tracking system). In this time period, the IT Group worked on:

- 1,446 System Action Requests (SAR's) related to business application and security requests,
- A further 209 SAR's related to network and hardware requests, and
- 449 Change Requests (CR's) where changes were made to the business application systems.

10.1. VISION ENHANCEMENTS

10.1.1. Loading Historical Data

WHAT WE PLANNED	Based on funding priorities, the birth registrations from 1916 to 1929 will be data entered and loaded into VISION.
WHAT WE DID	Backup historical research tapes covering the time period 1919 to 1929 were located and the birth indices for the period 1919 to 1929 were recreated and information was loaded directly into VISION.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The birth registry information on VISION is now complete which has two major benefits. It has virtually eliminated the requirement to refer to microfiche to locate a birth event. And it has improved the quality of the data required for the verification requests (e.g. Passport), thus minimizing the impact on the Agency's operational staff.
FUTURE PLANS	Work will be undertaken to locate and analyse Death and Marriage indices from 1900 to 1930. If the data can be found, then it will be loaded into VISION.

10.1.2. Loading of Wills Probate Data

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	A new offsite load process was created to add the probate information received from the Probate Court to the existing Wills Notices.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Once a Will has been probated, it is no longer considered active during the Search process. This speeds up the search process, during both the computer and manual processing.
FUTURE PLANS	Loading of the backlog of probate information will be completed during fiscal 2003/2004. For then on, Wills Notices will be updated with the probate information as soon as they are received from the courts.

10.1.3. Direct Entry of BC Online Wills Searches into VISION

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	The existing BC Online Wills Search system was enhanced so that data entered during the day was loaded directly into VISION that night, bypassing offsite data entry.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Wills Searches entered through BC Online now are processed within 24 hours instead of within three days, and the offsite data entry costs have been eliminated.
FUTURE PLANS	This activity has met all objectives.

10.1.4. VISION Marketing

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency plans to continue marketing VISION in cooperation with its private sector marketing partner to other American states.
WHAT WE DID	During fiscal 2002/2003, the Agency extended its agreement with its private sector marketing partner for another five years. In addition, the scope of the private sector marketing partner was expanded to allow marketing internationally, excluding Canada and those countries where the United States cannot do business (e.g. Cuba). In consideration of expanding the marketing scope, the revised agreement now includes an annual payment from

	the private sector marketing partner to the British Columbia government.
WHAT THIS MEANS	This new agreement continues to demonstrate the recognized capabilities of the VISION product developed at the Agency and provides a source of government revenue leveraging BC-developed assets to support programs for BC residents.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency's private sector marketing partner plans to continue marketing VISION, both to other countries and to other American states.

10.1.5. VISION Upgrade

WHAT WE PLANNED	Continue to upgrade the database as the software platform (Oracle) evolves and create the capability to have VISION available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24-by-7) for use both internally and by designated clients (Passport, Immigration, etcetera).
WHAT WE DID	All VISION databases were upgraded to Oracle9i in preparation for receiving birth certificate verification requests (from Passport, Immigration, etc.). As a result of this upgrade, VISION is now available 18-by-7. In addition, all application servers were upgraded from Microsoft NT to Microsoft 2000.
WHAT THIS MEANS	These upgrades enable the Agency to upgrade the VISION application and the Oracle application server software when required.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will expand the availability of VISION to 23-by-7 or 24-by-7 when the funding is available.

10.1.6. VISION Environment Documentation

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	A contractor was hired to document the technological infrastructure, both hardware and software, for the VISION servers using HTML.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Significant tuning and optimization has been done on the servers. Documenting their current status facilitates continued enhancements and disaster recovery.

FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to document changes using HTML so that all IT people have access to the documentation.

10.1.7. Character Set Enhancement

WHAT WE PLANNED	At such time when a request is received from the public, the possibility of adding this enhancement to the system will be reviewed.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency did not receive any requests from the public for this service; therefore, no system changes were done to provide this service.
WHAT THIS MEANS	At present, client needs are being met with current system capabilities.
FUTURE PLANS	At such time when a request is received from the public, the possibility of adding this enhancement to the system will be reviewed.

10.1.8. Vital Chek Credit Card Processing Upgrade

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	The existing process was replaced with Java scripts to match up with the other copies of VISION running in the United States.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Future upgrades and enhancements will be easier now that the Agency has the same interface as is used by the other four VISION installations.
FUTURE PLANS	When other VISION installations are enhanced, the Agency will take advantage of those enhancements.

10.1.9. Asset Inventory

WHAT WE PLANNED	The project will be formalized and expanded to include a computer asset management application based on business priorities.
WHAT WE DID	A formal project was created within the Agency and an MS-Access application was built to track all the computer hardware and software assets.

WHAT THIS MEANS	The Agency's annual computer upgrade project took significantly less time this year to organize and complete, the Agency did not need to contract with additional resources (as was done in the past), and all software and hardware are accounted for.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to ensure that all computer assets are recorded as they are purchased, moved, or retired.

10.1.10. Security Access Tracking

WHAT WE PLANNED	The project will be formalized and expanded to include the business processes involved in granting security access.
WHAT WE DID	An MS-Access database was created to track the security access of everyone who has access to Agency data. In addition, identified standard access profiles were created and approved for use with new hires and internal transfers. These profiles are available on the Agency's Intranet for use by all Agency managers. Having standard access profiles allowed us to create a process for obtaining approvals requiring exceptional access.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The approval process and authorization process for system access has been streamlined and clarified. The Agency can do accurate audits of their employee and client access at any time. Security has been increased because of the increased monitoring of access privileges and highlighting of exceptional access.
FUTURE PLANS	The system will continue to be upgraded as new profiles and access requirements are identified.

10.1.11. Enhancements to the Public Internet and VSA Intranet Sites

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will continue to review the capabilities of the Public Internet and Ministry Intranet sites and modify them as appropriate to identified business requirements.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency has continued to add data and search capabilities to the VSA Public Internet and Private Intranet sites. In addition several enhancements were added to the system that maintains the data for those sites.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Both the public and Agency personnel will have faster access and more accurate information better suited to the requirements of these clients.

FUTURE PLANS	The VSA will continue to review the capabilities of the Public Internet and Ministry Intranet sites and modify them as appropriate to identified business requirements.

10.1.12. Marriage Licence Issuer System Enhancements

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	In support of the government's move away from direct involvement with the general public, the Agency upgraded the freely distributed Marriage Licence Issuer system to use a newer version of the operating system (MS-Access 97) and perform in a multi-user environment.
WHAT THIS MEANS	This upgrade allowed Coast Capital Insurance on Vancouver Island to work in a multi-user environment and provides the means for us to discontinue selling Marriage Licences at our Victoria office.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency plans to upgrade all Marriage Licence Issuers to this newer version in Fiscal 2003/04. The Agency is considering discontinuing the sale of Marriage Licences at our Victoria office.

10.2. NATIONAL VITAL EVENTS DATA CAPTURE AND ROUTING SYSTEM

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Canadian Vital Statistics Council is seeking federal and provincial funding that will allow this project to move forward to the next stage.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency supported the Vital Statistics Council in their search for a funding partner.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The project continues to be under consideration.
FUTURE PLANS	The Canadian Vital Statistics Council is continuing to seek federal, provincial, and/or private funding which will allow this project to move forward to the next stage.

10.3. EXPANSION OF ACCESS TO VISION

10.3.1. Government Agent Access

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will continue to support the Government Agents, both as their staff changes and as additional functionality is identified as within the scope of the business partnership with GA offices.

WHAT WE DID	The Agency continued to support the Government Agents by modifying system access to reflect additions, changes and deletions to GA staff in individual offices.
WHAT THIS MEANS	All Government Agents continue to have access to the Vital Statistics Services Inquiry function.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to support the Government Agents, both as their staff changes and as additional functionality is identified as within the scope of the business partnership with GA offices.

10.3.2. Funeral Home Access

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will determine interest at a forthcoming meeting of Funeral Service providers to move the registration of Death events from an Access based program to a secure interface between funeral homes to the Agency's "VISION" computer registry program, and select a location where a pilot project could be implemented.
WHAT WE DID	Our Systems personnel demonstrated an "alpha" version of the pilot interface at the Funeral Services Association of British Columbia in March of 2002. Development of the interface was initially limited due to other system priorities that included the VISION data base update to Oracle 9i. A decision was later made to defer development pending impact assessment of forthcoming government policies respecting E-Government Initiatives.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Once the Agency finalizes a review of E-Government Initiatives, the successful development of a secure web interface will allow real-time entry and registration of death events, and allow for the timely issuance of burial permits and death certificates all within one application. Changing to a web-based system will ensure no delay in notification of deaths to the Agency, which in turn will allow officials in areas such as the Coroner's office and Ministry for Children and Families to obtain the information they require in a very timely manner.
FUTURE PLANS	Resources will continue to explore the concept of a web-interface for funeral service providers in accordance with applicable guidelines of the E-Government Initiatives program under the Premier's Chief Information Office.

10.3.3. Electronic Notice of Birth and Request for a PHN

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will continue to work with the pilot hospitals (at that time, BC Children's Hospital/BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre in Vancouver) to further refine the business requirements for the working system.
WHAT WE DID	The requirements analysis with BC Children's Hospital/BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre in Vancouver was concluded and discussions were initiated with another partner - the Vancouver Island Health Authority. The scope of the project was also reduced to cover Electronic Notice of Birth only.
WHAT THIS MEANS	This project will assist the hospitals in supplying the Notice of Birth information to the Vital Statistics Agency within the required statutory 48-hour period and maintain or increase the level of data quality of the Notice of Birth.
FUTURE PLANS	In fiscal 2003/2004, the Agency and the Vancouver Island Health Authority will develop a pilot system that will include the electronic interface and processes and the supporting business processes.

10.4. DATA WAREHOUSE (VISTA)

WHAT WE PLANNED	All operational activities and technical components will be fully documented so that in-house staff will be able to maintain the system. Identified business enhancements will be documented and schedules for the development of these requirements will be undertaken.
WHAT WE DID	The VISTA Rollout project was initiated so that clients outside of the Agency (Ministry of Health Planning, Ministry of children & Families, the Health Authorities, Simon Fraser University, and a Medical Health Officer) would have immediate access to the data. In addition, development was started on a Web version of the VISTA application, an online Help system, and the integration of a Geographical Information System (GIS) interface with the VISTA data.
WHAT THIS MEANS	People who do analysis using Vital Statistics data will have a user-friendly method of gaining immediate access to the data they require.
FUTURE PLANS	The VISTA Rollout project will be expanded, and development of the Web version of the VISTA application,

online Help system, and integrated GIS interface will continue.

10.5. OTHER IT PROJECTS

10.5.1. Release of Historical Vital Event Records

WHAT WE PLANNED	Review work is being undertaken to determine the viability of using "one off" scanning of images to allow all released records (births 1872 to 1901, marriages 1872 to 1926, and deaths 1872 to 1981) to be made available through the Internet. During fiscal 2002/2003, the Agency expects to finalize details of this expanded offering.
WHAT WE DID	One more year of records (Births - 1902, Marriages - 1927, and Deaths - 1982) were made available to the general public.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Persons wishing to purchase birth, death and/or marriage records for events occurring in the Province of British Columbia are able to access the latest data that we can release by legislation.
FUTURE PLANS	To continue maintaining microfilm records and vital event indices to ensure that vital event records can be released in the year in which they are eligible for release.

10.5.2. MICAR Updates

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency will continue to update SuperMicar (the computer system used to analyse and identify the recognized cause of death for an individual) as revisions become available and will make any changes necessary to VISION and the Data Warehouse to accommodate these updates.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency updated SuperMicar several times as new releases were received from Statistics Canada.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Medical coding continues to generate more accurate data.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to update SuperMicar as revisions become available and will make any changes necessary to VISION and the Data Warehouse to accommodate these updates.

10.5.3. VIDEO CONFERENCING

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	A test environment was created which allowed full video conferencing to be done over the Internet where all participants could see each other. This system was demonstrated to the Population Health and Wellness area of the Ministry of Health Planning.
WHAT THIS MEANS	A videoconference can be created using the Internet where all parties can see each other and where no charges are incurred. The conference does not need to be created by a technician, but can be set up by the requestor.
FUTURE PLANS	During fiscal 2003/2004, all Agency meetings (including the weekly Manager's meeting) will make use of the video conferencing system. In addition, the Population Health and Wellness area of the Ministry of Health Planning may start using this system to meet remotely with the various Health Authorities.

10.6. IMPACTS OF SEPTEMER 11, 2001

10.6.1. Strong Birth Certificate

WHAT WE PLANNED	This project is at the feasibility stage and will require further cost impact and risk assessment analysis.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency explored the technology and quantified the costs to support the reporting of lost and stolen certificates.
WHAT THIS MEANS	Outside agencies will have more confidence that the document presented is a valid document.
FUTURE PLANS	In fiscal 2003/2004, the Agency plans on creating the application changes and supporting business processes to support the recording of lost and stolen certificates. In addition, the Agency will continue to explore the system and business process changes necessary for activating and/or de-listing certificates.

10.6.2. Birth Certificate Validation - Passport Office

WHAT WE PLANNED	The pilot project will be implemented and assessed during fiscal 2002/2003 and, if found feasible, will potentially be rolled out to all passport offices during fiscal 2003/2004.

WHAT WE DID	Considerable work was done on obtaining agreement on the business processes, and a significant portion of the computer system was developed. Both Passport and the Agency signed the Letter of Intent and the Project Charter, and several internal documents were created and signed off by the Agency.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The business processes and technology have been agreed to by both the Agency and Passport, setting the stage for running the pilot.
FUTURE PLANS	During fiscal 2003/2004, the pilot and the evaluation will be completed. Depending upon the outcome of the pilot, work may get underway on the creation of an ongoing agreement with Passport.

10.6.3. Birth Certificate Validation - HRDC

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) signed a Letter of Intent, and contribution funding was received to create a Birth Certificate validation system similar to that being done for Passport.
WHAT THIS MEANS	HRDC produces Social Insurance Number (SIN) cards for Canadian citizens. Similar to Passport, they need to verify that a BC Birth Certificate presented as proof of identity is both a valid birth certificate and relates to the person applying.
FUTURE PLANS	During fiscal 2003/2004, the Agency will pursue the development and implementation of a pilot system.

10.6.4. Change of Name Criminal Record Check

WHAT WE PLANNED	In fiscal 2002/2003, the Agency will modify the processes and system to ensure that fingerprints are sent to the RCMP for criminal record checks.
WHAT WE DID	A system was put in place to allow the Agency to collect fingerprints so that criminal record checks can be done using fingerprints as well as the other identity components (name, birth date, birth place).
WHAT THIS MEANS	A person's criminal record will be maintained even if they change their name.

FUTURE PLANS	This activity has met all objectives.

10.6.5. BC Death/BC Birth Link

WHAT WE PLANNED	This was a new project identified and initiated during the current fiscal year.
WHAT WE DID	A change was made to the system where the deceased in a Death event was reported as being born in British Columbia, to create a hard link to the associated Birth record. If the computer could not make the link, then the death was reported so that a person could investigate.
WHAT THIS MEANS	One of the items that the Agency returns to a Verification request (e.g. from Passport or HRDC) is whether or not the person identified on the birth certificate is dead. If the person is reported dead, then this raises a fraud issue. This project enables us to provide more accurate information to the requestor.
FUTURE PLANS	This activity has met all objectives.

11. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

WHAT WE PLANNED	The Agency continues to exercise its option to internally manage communication issues that are specifically addressed and pre-approved in the Agency's business plans.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency has in-house technical staff members who are well versed in graphic design and pre-production layout work that follows the Agency's, the Ministry's and the BC Government's graphic design standards for conventional and Internet publication.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue to use the expertise of the Ministry's Communication Branch in a number of important areas. The Agency handles most day-to-day media requests for standard statistical information; however, the Ministry's Communication Branch will be consulted in all press releases and media-related or sensitive issues. The Branch is also consulted for valuable counsel in all new external communication initiatives.

12. HEALTH STATUS REGISTRY

12.1. MULTI-USER INTERFACE

WHAT WE PLANNED	Further efficiency in data access and maintenance will be achieved by converting the database to a true client server model using Oracle software.
WHAT WE DID	The existing MS Access database was ported to Oracle and upgraded. Automatic links to VISION were included that automatically the update HSR records when a new record is generated in VISION that has an HSR reportable condition. The new system is currently in testing.
WHAT THIS MEANS	When implemented, the system will have expanded capability to allow several users simultaneous access to edit and extract data for analysis. The VISTA reporting tool will enable fast data extraction and analysis for both standard reports and ad hoc querying.
FUTURE PLANS	The Agency will continue work on system enhancements.

12.2. NEW DATA SOURCES

WHAT WE PLANNED	The HSR will continue to pursue data sources and processes to facilitate the inclusion of all incidences of conditions relevant to the HSR.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency has signed a data access agreement, which will allow it to obtain data on congenital anomalies found in terminated pregnancies. A number of initiatives have been undertaken regarding new reporting sources for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder and a formal agreement with the PHSA has been reached regarding the reporting of ASD. The Agency funded joint work by the Asante Centre for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Sunnyhill Health Centre for Children and the Centre for Community Child Health Research into the feasibility of a provincial strategy on diagnosis, coding and classification of FASD cases.
WHAT THIS MEANS	The BC Health Status Registry has proven to be a leader in the surveillance of birth anomalies on the national and international scene. The HSR's work on FAS supports the Ministry's work on mitigating effects of this condition.
FUTURE PLANS	The HSR will continue to pursue initiatives to maintain the quality and comprehensiveness of its database.

12.3. DATA ANALYSE

WHAT WE PLANNED	The HSR plans to release Annual Reports and Feature Reports highlighting the incidence of specific birth conditions on a regular basis.
WHAT WE DID	An Annual Report of the Registry including data up to 2000 was released in the Fall of 2002.
FUTURE PLANS	The Registry will continue providing reports and database updates to its partner agencies.

13. VITAL STATISTICS COUNCIL FOR CANADA

13.1. DESCRIPTION

The Vital Statistics Council for Canada is a partnership between all provincial and territorial government departments of vital statistics in Canada and Statistics Canada the purpose of which is to ensure standard methods of collecting, compiling and publishing vital statistics. Council also facilitates the exchange vital event data between provinces, territories and the federal governments, enables the compilation of vital statistics at the national level and serves as an advisory body to provincial/territorial registrars and the Health Statistics Division of Statistics Canada.

13.1.1. Key Business Functions

- organise an annual inter-jurisdictional forum to discuss issues around registration and certification of births, deaths, marriages, stillbirths and changes of names;
- facilitate sharing, exchange and retention of information, data and research between jurisdictions;
- discuss, with a view to achieving common approaches and uniformity where appropriate, the forms and certificates being used, the governing legislation, the procedures and format of the transfer and receipt of national and provincial/territorial data to/from Statistics Canada;
- liaise with all groups of service providers (e.g. physicians, coroners, funeral directors, law enforcement agencies, lawyers, notaries, etc.);
- liaise with other federal and provincial government departments, including the Passport Office, HRDC Income Security Programs, the Social Insurance Number Registry, Provincial Motor Vehicle Licensing and Provincial Social Services Ministries and Agencies;
- support and achieve a synergy of a national data base; and
- liaise with US counterparts.

13.2. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

WHAT WE PLANNED	Agency plans included maintenance of its role as an active member of Council and participation on many committees of Council. In addition the Agency will provide resources in support of Council activities where possible.
WHAT WE DID	The Agency Deputy CEO/SFO represented the Province on Council and sat on the Council Executive Committee as Chair Elect through fiscal 2003. The CEO represented the province prior to fiscal 2002.

Prior to fiscal 2002 Agency staff were involved in the following committees and activities;

- Committee on Electronic Birth and Death Registration;
- Data Standards and Quality Sub Committee;
- Certificate and Security Sub Committee;
- Legislation, Freedom of Information and Forms;
- Confidential Change of Name; and
- Adoption Information Committee.

During fiscal 2003 Agency staff were involved in the following committees;

- Executive Committee;
- Security Committee;
- Registration Processes Committee;
- HRDC Negotiations Committee;
- National Routing System Project Committee;
- Website Sub-Committee

During fiscal 2003 Agency staff provided support to Council activities by;

- Providing editorial services and production support for Vital News, the Council quarterly newsletter;
- Preparation of the Report of the Security Committee and presentation of related materials to Council and its US counterpart, the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems.
- Providing support to the HRDC Negotiations Committee;
- Managing the operation of the Council website.

WHAT THIS MEANS

By participating and supporting a national system of vital statistics the Agency minimizes the burden of data

collection on the public at large while assuring the collection of the best quality of internationally compatible vital event data. The high level of participation by the Agency ensures that the province can effectively influence national level decisions on a broad spectrum of vital statistics related issues.

FUTURE PLANS

The Agency will continue to lead and support the Vital Statistics Council for Canada and its strategic initiatives as defined in its Strategic Business Plan and its Technical Plans as defined in its Information and Systems Plan. Year to year activities outlined in its Annual Business Plan will be integrated into the activities of the Agency.

APPENDIX A: EXPENDITURE DETAIL 2002/03

STOB		BUDGET 2002/03	ACTUAL 2002/03	VARIANCE 2002/03
50	**SALARIES**	**3,994,000**	**3,913,301**	**80,699**
	BASE SALARIES	3,944,000	3,827,814	116,186
	OVERTIME	20,000	29,704	(9,704)
	LUMP SUM	30,000	55,783	(25,783)
51	**SUPPLEMENTARY SALARIES**	**50,000**	**47,853**	**2,147**
52	**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**	**903,000**	**935,035**	**(32,035)**
57	**TRAVEL**	**55,000**	**67,393**	**(12,393)**
60	**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**	**25,000**	**32,210**	**(7,210)**
	PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS	25,000	32,210	(7,210)
63	**INFORMATION SYSTEMS**	**954,000**	**1,137,945**	**(183,945)**
	DATA ENTRY	118,600	131,221	(12,621)
	INFORMATION SYSTEMS SUPPLIES	21,870	37,451	(15,581)
	NETWORK AND WORKSTATION SUPPORT	172,480	175,000	(2,520)
	INFORMATION SYSTEMS CONSULTING	217,040	245,667	(28,627)
	VOICE/FAX TELECOMMUNICATIONS	253,925	220,826	33,099
	CELL TELEPHONES	4,675	7,825	(3,150)
	NETWORK CHARGES	12,970	19,281	(6,311)
	MINOR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE	9,250	5,322	3,928
	SOFTWARE LICENCES	81,090	145,104	(64,014)
	HARDWARE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT	62,100	110,979	(48,879)
	SYSTEMS HARDWARE LEASES	0	39,269	(39,269)
	RECOVERABLE INFO SYSTEMS	0	0	0
65	**OFFICE AND BUSINESS EXPENSES**	**555,000**	**558,733**	**(3,733)**
	OFFICE EXPENSES - GENERAL	34,200	7,054	27,146
	PRINTED MATERIALS	107,000	106,931	69
	OFFICE STATIONARY AND SUPPLIES	25,000	25,328	(328)
	MINOR FURNITURE	6,000	6,850	(850)
	POSTAL SERVICES	235,000	240,069	(5,069)
	PHOTOCOPIERS	14,000	13,787	213
	COURIER SERVICES	67,000	70,959	(3,959)
	BOOKS, TECHNICAL JOURNALS & SUBSCRIPTIONS	9,800	5,112	4,688
	TRAINING	33,500	64,175	(30,675)
	BUSINESS EXPENSES	5,000	7,329	(2,329)
	PROFESSIONAL ALLOWANCES & MEMBERSHIP DUES	1,500	1,323	177
	RECOVERABLE – FORMS	17,000	9,816	7,184

Expenditure Detail 2002/03 (cont'd)

STOB		BUDGET 2002/03	ACTUAL 2002/03	VARIANCE 2002/03
68	**STATUTORY NOTICES**	**108,000**	**86,832**	**21,168**
	CHANGE OF NAME ADVERTISING	82,000	56,922	25,078
	ANNUAL REPORT	24,000	25,915	(1,915)
	OTHER	2,000	3,995	(1,995)
69	**UTILITIES/MATERIALS/SUPPLIES**	**27,000**	**33,330**	**(6,330)**
	MICROFILMING	27,000	33,330	(6,330)
70	**OPERATING EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**	**26,000**	**9,821**	**16,179**
	NON-VEHICLE	13,000	1,393	11,607
	VEHICLE LEASE	6,400	5,198	1,202
	VEHICLE OTHER	6,600	3,230	3,370
73	**AMORTIZATION EXPENSE**	**479,000**	**552,552**	**(73,552)**
	INFORMATION SYSTEMS	391,500	476,649	(85,149)
	OFFICE FURNITURE	75,200	63,821	11,379
	SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT	12,300	12,082	218
75	**BUILDING OCCUPANCY CHARGES**	**562,000**	**557,628**	**4,372**
	VICTORIA	374,000	386,384	(12,384)
	VANCOUVER	65,000	73,228	(8,228)
	KELOWNA	62,000	41,634	20,366
	PRINCE GEORGE	41,000	34,758	6,242
	RENTAL - WAREHOUSE	10,000	16,753	(6,753)
	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	10,000	4,871	5,129
77	**GRANTS**	**18,000**	**50,000**	**(32,000)**
	GRANTS TO UNIVERSITIES	18,000	50,000	(32,000)
80	**CONTRIBUTIONS**	**38,000**	**27,187**	**10,813**
	DISTRICT REGISTRAR ANCILLARY FEES	5,000	5,525	(525)
	SERVICE PROVIDERS	30,000	21,235	8,765
	NON-PUBLIC SERVANT TRAVEL	3,000	427	2,573
	INTEREST AND OTHER EXPENSES	**0**	**441**	**(441)**
	FINANCING COSTS	0	441	(441)
	GROSS APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES	**7,794,000**	**8,010,261**	**(216,261)**
88	**INTERNAL RECOVERIES**	**(278,000)**	**(520,304)**	**242,304**
	SOCIAL SERVICES MINISTRIES	(255,000)	(520,304)	265,304
	OTHER MINISTRIES	(23,000)	0	(23,000)
89	**RECOVERIES - EXTERNAL**	**(407,000)**	**(563,706)**	**156,706**
	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	(132,000)	(167,508)	35,508
	ADOPTIONS	(40,000)	(32,100)	(7,900)
	COMMEMORATIVES	(124,000)	(160,450)	36,450
	GENEALOGY	(85,000)	(127,350)	42,350
	RESEARCH	(20,000)	(62,960)	42,960
	OTHER	(6,000)	(13,338)	7,338
	NET APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES	**7,109,000**	**6,926,251**	**182,749**

Expenditure Detail 2002/03 (cont'd)

STOB	BUDGET 2002/03	ACTUAL 2002/03	VARIANCE 2002/03
CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS			
MAINFRAME AND MINI HARDWARE	735,000	407,309	327,691
PC AND PERIPHERAL HARDWARE	100,000	106,983	(6,983)
MAINFRAME AND MINI SOFTWARE	663,000	259,465	403,535
PC SOFTWARE	55,000	15,708	39,292
OPERATING EQUIPMENT	5,000	5,876	(876)
OFFICE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT	20,000	19,231	769
TOTAL CAPITAL ACQUISITIONS	**1,578,000**	**814,572**	**763,428**

APPENDIX B: STATUS REPORT ON FLEXIBILITY POLICIES

As part of establishing Vital Statistics as a Special Operating Agency, Treasury Board granted a number of policy flexibilities to the new Special Operating Agency. The original flexibility policies are located in the Agency Framework Agreement signed March 14, 1996. As a result of excellent performance in the first three years as a SOA, Treasury Board agreed to the negotiation of additional flexibilities during the period of the 1999-2004 Business Plan.

B.1 APPROPRIATION CONTROLS

B.1.1 Expenditure Carryovers

The Agency has realised operating budget surpluses in each year since its establishment as a SOA in fiscal 1996/1997. The accumulated operating surplus since implementation of the S0A, including the fiscal 2002/2003 surplus of $182,749, is $1,469,798. Access to carry-over surpluses has effectively been eliminated as a result of the government policy to maintain Ministry budgets at pre-established levels in order to balance the provincial budget in fiscal 2004/05. These input controls have forced the Agency to focus on smaller, short-term projects due to the lack of certainty as to the availability of surpluses being available to fund longer-term projects. The Agency will work with Treasury Board staff in an attempt to formally implement this flexibility in the future.

B.1.2 Multi-year Budgeting

Informally, the Agency and Treasury Board staff have effectively invoked this flexibility through the establishment of the spending plans in the business plan. The multi year budgets have been useful in establishing a level of certainty over a multi-year period for the Agency, however, the inability of the Agency to access prior years surpluses reduces the effectiveness of these multi-years budgets. They have effectively remained pre approval of fixed annual allocations for three years in advance. During fiscal 2003/04 the Agency will put forward a proposal to Treasury Board staff to implement a more effective multi-year budgeting process for fiscal 2004/05 through fiscal 2006/07.

B.1.3 Spending of Recoveries Above Estimates

Although the Agency realised significant recoveries above estimates in each of the last six fiscal years it has to date been unable to fully access this flexibility because of the inability to bring these surpluses forward from one fiscal year to the next. (The extent of recoveries above estimates may not be recognised until close to the end of the fiscal year when little or no time is available to initiate projects utilising these funds). Establishment of a mechanism to access prior year's expenditure carryovers and effective multi-year budgeting will facilitate full access to this flexibility.

B.1.4 Exemption from Expenditure Restraint Exercises

With the establishment of the Agency as an independent financial accounting entity and placement of out of province travel plans in its annual Business Plan the Agency has fully implemented this flexibility in terms of Ministry expenditure restraint exercises. The Agency

recognises the need for restraint and as a result continues to operate in the spirit of restraint during periods of cross government restraint exercises.

B.2 ACCOMMODATION

B.2.1 Authority to Implement Accommodation and Major Project Plans Approved in the Business Plan

The Agency has the authority to implement accommodation and Major Project plans approved in the Business Plan. This flexibility was implemented in fiscal 1996/1997 in order to reduce space requirements in the Vancouver Regional office in compliance with the 1996/1997 Business Plan. These plans were fully implemented in fiscal 1997/1998. There has been no requirement to undertake major accommodation projects since.

B.2.2 Authority to Contract With B.C.B.C. or a Private Company

The Agency has the authority to contract with B.C.B.C. or a private company. As partners, B.C.B.C. representatives and the Agency continue to analyse lease options, overhead and maintenance agreements to determine if cost savings can be identified.

Experience to date indicates that B.C.B.C. continues to be committed to working directly with and maintaining a good working relationship with the Agency.

B.3 ADVERTISING AND PUBLICATIONS

B.3.1 Communications Plan

With the support of Treasury Board the Agency may negotiate agreements and obtain pre-approval of a communications plan and budget from the Government Communications Office. This flexibility has been fully implemented as it applies to Vital Statistics operations under complete control of the Agency.

B.3.2 Control of Communications Activities

The Agency is authorized to have direct control of communications activities, commitments and expenditures as outlined in the annual communications plan. This flexibility has been fully implemented.

B.4 AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS

The Agency has fully implemented its authority in negotiating and signing all intra and inter governmental agreements to which the Agency is party. Data access and recovery agreements have been struck with numerous provincial and federal ministries as well as vital statistics organisations in other provinces. The Agency has recently obtained approval to authorize its own contribution accounts under section 25 of the Financial Administration Act. This will facilitate the Agencies ability to obtain contributions from other government when entering into agreements with these governments.

B.5 CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

The Agency has fully implemented full authority over capital expenditures less than $250,000 as per this flexibility. With the exception of systems development, specifically on the data warehouse project, no capital projects exceeding $250,000 were included in the Business Plan or were undertaken in fiscal 2002/2003.

B.6 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

B.6.1 Systems Expenditures

The flexibility authorises the Agency to spend up to $1 million and up to 10% above amounts identified in the Business Plan as planned expenditures. The authority of the Agency to take advantage of this flexibility is now fully recognised by the Ministry. This flexibility has been fully implemented.

B.6.2 Development of Cost Effective Systems Solutions

As a result of the Agency's ability to develop its own systems solutions the Agency has been able to attain and exceed its spending reduction targets over the past four fiscal years. The Agency continues to work with CITS and other ministries to develop innovative solutions applicable to other organisations as part of its systems development projects.

B.7 MACHINERY, EQUIPMENT, LAND, BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The Agency is authorized to purchase or lease machinery and equipment up to a cost of $1 million if any item over $250,000 is included in the Business Plan. There has been no requirement to exercise this flexibility to date.

B.8 SERVICE CONTRACTS/CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The Agency has the authority to enter into service contracts up to $250,000, provided contracts are tendered using government policy. All contracts entered into by the Agency in 2002/2003 were less than $250,000. The Agency tenders and manages its own contracts and receives assistance from the Purchasing Commission at the Agency's request.

B.9 STAFFING LIMITS

The Agency is permitted access to the Government's Corporate FTE complement for additional FTE requirements that are related to unanticipated volume demands. The Agency has not been required to use this access as it has been under its FTE budget in all fiscal years since this flexibility was granted.

B.10 VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

The Agency is authorized to enter into its own vehicle management and leasing program. The Agency continued to manage its own vehicles throughout 2002/2003 although leases were contracted through the Ministry. The Agency would derive no benefit by opting out of Government fleet lease.

B.11 PAYMENTS BASED ON CONTRIBUTIONS

The Agency has authority to approve grants to a maximum of $250,000 on a per item basis, and up to $1 million if detailed in the Business Plan. There were no grants in excess of $250,000 in 2002/2003.

B.12 PURCHASE OF MATERIAL

The Agency has the authority to negotiate with Procurement Shared Services or to purchase through independent suppliers. The Agency has worked with the Procurement Shared Services on purchases of major items and only exercised independent authority for minor items where it has been established that it is cost effective to do so.

B.13 SALES OF SURPLUS ASSETS

The Agency has the ability to contract asset disposal with either the Procurement Shared Services or with the private sector with revenue to be directly returned to the Agency. Based on a limited amount of equipment identified as surplus and due to Ministry needs, the Agency has continued to ship surplus equipment to the Ministry for redistribution.

B.14 MICROGRAPHIC SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT

The Agency has authority to purchase micrographic services and equipment up to $500,000 but the Agency's purchase of micrographic services and equipment did not exceed $18,000 for the 2002/2003 fiscal year.

B.15 BC MAIL PLUS

The Agency is authorized to purchase or contract for postal equipment or services to meet its specific requirements, or may continue to contract with BC Mail Plus. In fiscal 2002/2003 the Agency continued to contract a number of hospital auxiliaries to stuff birth information packages and ensure current stock were maintained on hospital maternity wards. Stuffing and distribution to hospitals was previously contracted with BC Mail Plus. Cost has been reduced by approximately $8,000 annually and contracting with hospital auxiliaries has proven to be more effective as materials are readily available on maternity wards when and where they are required.

B.16 PHOTOCOPYING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The authority for approval for the purchase of photocopying equipment and related service contracts has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Agency. In fiscal 2002/2003 the Agency has exercised its authority only to replace obsolete equipment as the Ministry continues to supply cost effective Quick Print Services.

B.16.1 Government Records and Recorded Information Management

The Agency has full authority over records and recorded information management within the scope of the *Financial Administration Act* and associated government policy. As implementation of this flexibility is not considered a high priority, the Agency has continued to use Ministry records management services.

B.17 TRAVEL

B.17.1 Accommodation Policies

The Agency is authorized to exceed overnight accommodation rates where it is cost justifiable. Establishment of the Agency as its own financial accounting entity has enabled the Agency to fully implement this flexibility, though only minimal utilisation was required in fiscal 2002/2003.

B.17.2 Out of Province Travel

The Agency is approved to authorize travel within Canada (outside British Columbia) and the United States for established business purposes. This flexibility has been fully implemented though general out of province travel plans are submitted to Treasury Board Staff at the beginning of the fiscal year for information purposes.

B.17.3 Payment of Travel Claims

The Agency has the authority to implement alternative processes for the processing and payment of travel claims (e.g. SFO Bank Account). Due to the implementation of the CAS system, the use of American Express Corporate Cards for travel and the establishment of the Agency as its own financial accounting entity, there is no longer a requirement for alternative processes.

B.17.4 Contracted Travel Services

The Agency is authorized to make its own travel arrangements or make use of the Ministry contracted travel agency. The Agency has continued to make use of the Ministry travel agency though maintains its own business travel account. The Agency will be monitoring changes in the travel industry during fiscal 2003/2004 to ensure it obtains the most cost-effective means of meeting its travel needs.

B.18 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

B.18.1 Staffing and Classification Issues

The CEO may review staffing and classification issues directly with PSERC where essential to meet the business success of the Agency. To date there has been no requirement to make use of this flexibility provision.

B.18.2 Employee Incentives and Rewards

The Agency may provide work-related incentives and rewards over and above those normally available. The Agency established a small fund in its fiscal 1998/1999 budget to provide token (non-financial) awards to employees. The Agency has fully implemented the provincial governments Staff Appreciation Awards Policy in order to recognise outstanding employee performance. Due to the success of the Agency in obtaining recognition and awards for its employees through the Employee Recognition Program, and through the Public Service Awards Program, additional awards over and above those normally available have not been deemed necessary in the past three fiscal years.

B.18.3 FTE Freeze Exemption

The Agency is authorized to operate within its approved Business Plan and will be exempt from Treasury Board FTE freezes. This flexibility has been implemented within the context of Government/Ministry employee placement programs. Although the Agency has not been required to obtain additional FTEs under this flexibility the Agency has been able to fill vacant positions. There has been a negative impact resulting from employee placement programs as employees are placed on the basis of seniority; placements are frequently unqualified for the positions in which they are placed resulting in extensive training being required with a high turnover of some placements.